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[CATCHING AN HEIRESS.]

## THE MYSTIC EYE OF HEATHCOTE.

### CHAPTER V.

For ever, Fortune, wilt thou prove  
An unrelenting foe to love;  
And, when we meet a mutual heart,  
Come in between, and bid us part?

Thomson.

The London solicitor and St. Denys, the guardian, were both sorely puzzled when they entered upon the settlement of the great Heathcote property. All the family jewels—and they were many and ancient, having come down as heir-looms to Heathcotes since the first knight, bearing the name, broke his lance at Cressy—all these massive old gems, all the gorgeous plate, the great cashbox, with its heaps of clinking guineas, and the wondrous old opal keeper ring, the "Mystic Eye" as it had been superstitiously termed, were missing.

There were a dozen persons ready to aver that Lord Heathcote wore this ring on the afternoon prior to his death, and his daughter asserted that it was on his finger that night and that he had made reference to in the course of their last conversation. But it had disappeared from his dead finger. The whole thing was a mystery.

And for centuries it had been worn by the heir of the Abbey.

The little lawyer dug his wiry fingers into his wig, half beside himself.

Nurse Seaton and all the servants were respectfully questioned, but in vain; not the slightest clue could be obtained. As a last and final resort my Lady Heathcote offered a reward for its recovery—a handsome one, too—offering to pay the same from her own dowry.

"If I could only find it, Gracie," said Carlos as they stood together on the western terrace a few days previous to the intended departure for Italy.

For my lady had accomplished her desire. They were to winter at her villa somewhere near the Arno

—St. Denys Delmar and his daughter, Colonel Ludovic Hershaw, Lady Grace and herself.

Carlos had been offered his choice between remaining at Heathcote Abbey or sailing for Calcutta in a position secured for him by the Indian officer. The boy had chosen the latter, and his ship, the "Blue Heron," was to leave port on the morrow.

"If I could only find it," he said, standing there with Lady Grace, in the purple splendour of the closing day, "I should be so glad, for your sake and for my own too, for, to tell the truth, I am sadly cramped for money, and my lady's reward would set me up handsomely. Do you know," he added, suddenly, his fine, manly face flushing with eager ambition, "that this voyage is to be the beginning of my life? When I come back to Heathcote, little sister, you shall not be ashamed to own me for your brother."

"I am not ashamed of you now, Carlos," replied Lady Grace, laying her hand upon his shoulder, "and all the money and fame in the world would not make me love you better."

The slight touch of her dainty fingers sent the blood leaping through his veins like liquid fire; his face flushed, his eyes glowed with ecstasy.

Poor boy! he was not yet twenty-two, and young hearts are so impetuous.

"Bless your sweet lips for speaking the comforting words," he replied, lifting the little hand from his shoulder and kissing it with gallant adoration; "but," he added, a heavy shadow darkening his clear brow, "I am a luckless fellow now, Gracie, nameless, penniless, motherless. What is that proud woman in the hall below to me? She never gave me a caress or a tender word in her life. My mother forsooth! a bitter mockery of all that is holy and sacred. I cannot remember my father, my life is as barren as a desert. I never had a hope, a joy, an ambition until I looked upon your sweet face, my precious little sister. Oh, my darling, my wild rose in the wilderness, how can I go and leave you?"

The girl turned and gazed half startled into his excited face. It was eloquent with love.

A quick thrill shot through her. A burning, glow-

ing blush surged up to the crown of golden tresses round her brow, and her blue eyes drooped shyly beneath his ardent gaze. He was down at her feet in an instant, covering her trembling hands with kisses.

"My darling, my angel, my peerless, beautiful love," he cried, forgetting everything in the abandon of his wild passion, "I must speak, or my heart will burst. I love you, oh, I love you, Gracie, with a strong, deathless love! Say that you will not forget me when I am gone, and, as surely as yonder sun will rise again, I will come back worthy to offer you my love, worthy to ask you to be my wife."

Slowly the maiden flush of love and shame faded from the girl's face, and a deathly whiteness took its place; the fond words died unspoken on her lips, and she clasped her hands in unutterable agony.

"Ah," continued the impetuous youth, his voice full of reproach, "you do not love me—I am too poor, too humble—"

"Have mercy, Carlos," she broke forth at last, every word a sob, "I am not at liberty to love—you have forgotten my father's will."

The boy staggered back as if she had struck him.

"Great Heaven," he gasped, "I had forgotten."

Then they stood in silence, side by side, watching the sunlight dying in the West. For years they had been inseparable companions, sharing the same pleasures, thinking almost the same thoughts, and this was the result.

After a little while he turned, and held out his hand.

Those few brief moments had made him a man, strong to endure and brave to dare.

"Pardon me, little sister," he said, "if I have pained you. There is no command in your father's will to hinder me from loving you, and I shall love you till I die. Farewell!"

His face wore such a stony look of settled misery that the poor little girl was half frightened.

"Don't be angry with me, Carlos," she entreated, her eyes filling with tears; "I do love you, and I shall never love any one else, but I would sooner die than disobey my father's will. But I will give you

this as a parting gift," she continued, taking a ring from her finger, "and whenever you see it remember that your sister Gracie loves and prays for you."

He received it from her hand, and his face glowed up again with renewed hope.

It was an exquisite gem, a ring of heavy Indian gold, set with a circlet of pearls, in the centre of which perched a dove, every tiny feather a diamond, its eyes two minute rubies, and in its golden bill rested an olive branch formed of gold set with amethysts.

"Tis an emblem," he said, "and it shall be my talisman. I will work and hope, and by-and-bye my reward will come. Such love as mine will wrest its own even from the very grasp of fate. Good-bye, dear Gracie. Heaven bless you!"

One burning kiss—a kiss that thrilled her heart to its secret depths, and, in after years, seemed still to glow there like a living seal, making the touch of any other love-kiss an unholy sacrilege—and he was gone.

Slowly the sun dropped down into the western sea, and the chill, sombre twilight settled like a pall upon the grim old Abbey; and with a choking sensation of loneliness and despair, Lady Grace, no longer a gay girl, but an earnest, loving woman, despite her sixteen brief summers, crossed the darkening terrace, and went slowly up the broad stairs towards her own apartments.

Lady Heathcote made a few excited turns up and down her boudoir, then seated herself upon the tawny cushions of her couch, with a sigh upon her cheek.

"To think that I must be foiled thus," she cried, clenching her teeth and clasping her jewelled hands convulsively, "in the very hour of my triumph, and by her. Of all the world that she should be here, and I not even suspect it, oh, as I have seen her face. Am I an imbecile, or is my dotage? But she shall not thwart my plans, I'll murder her first! I shall never win her over, never. 'Twill be wasting time to try. I'd tear her heart out with my own hands if it were not for the secret of the terrors and the hidden treasures. She alone holds it; if she should die it would die with her, and that would ruin the work of years. 'Tis enough to drive one mad! What shall I do?"

She sprang up again and began to pace the floor, almost gasping for breath. Her hair, escaped from the diamond comb that held it, settled in a black torrent far below her waist, and her eyes glowed like those of a mad tigress.

There is no object more appalling than a thoroughly enraged woman, especially if she is a wicked, cruel one. And this woman, rushing up and down the room like a mad creature, her ruby lips flecked with foam, her hands clenched until the blood crimsoned the skin beneath her delicate nails—the very mother who bore her would not have known her.

Colonel Ludovic Hershaw had just harnessed in his pet mare, and the notion struck him that he would invite my lady to take a drive. To be sure her lord had only been buried a couple of months, but the colonel did not care, and who else should?

He ran lightly up the staircase, for he was as lithe and active as an athlete, this bronzed Indian officer; but, failing to find my lady in her morning sitting-room, he crossed to the private boudoir and entered unannounced. He was a very old friend—a very intimate friend—and could venture upon liberties with her ladyship.

"Carliotta," he began, calling her by her old-time, girlhood's name, "if you want a rare treat this morning—"

But at sight of her face the words died on his lips, and he stood transfixed with horror.

Even the wildest and most ferocious beast knows and acknowledges its master, and this proud, reckless woman acknowledged hers.

At the sound of this man's voice she ceased her rapid walk, the fire died out in her eyes, her rigid muscles relaxed, and, turning, she faced him with a kind of deprecating humility.

"Why, Carliotta, what has happened? What has excited you so?" he cried.

"Oh, nothing—nothing at all," she replied; "only I've been having a talk with that stupid Nurse Seaton, and she has vexed me so; come, sit here, and I'll tell you."

She sank down again amid the tawny velvet cushions, making a place for the colonel beside her. He took it with listless indifference, never seeming to notice the wistful look in her eyes, or to feel the soft touch of the hand she laid upon his shoulder.

"Well, what is it? What's the matter now?" he said, abruptly.

My lady hesitated a moment, debating within herself whether or not to divulge the secret she had discovered, but she decided to keep her own counsel, for the time at least.

"Nothing of any moment," she replied. "I sent for the woman hoping to make her my friend, and possibly to discover some clue in regard to that wonderful old opal ring; but she is crafty and stubborn, and may do us much injury. Really, Ludovic, we shall have to look about us, I think, or we may not succeed after all."

The colonel frowned; he was not just in the mood for business and difficulties that morning, and my lady's suggestions were somewhat inopportune.

"Well," he said, snapping his fingers, "we can afford to fall, can't we? I can go back to India, and you are Lady Heathcote!"

"Oh, Ludovic!" she cried, her eyes full of piteous supplication.

But he did not heed her. He arose, and strode to the window, looking down upon the drive, where his pet mare stood chafing at her bit.

"The work is yours," he said; "you began it, and you must end it."

"And you?" she questioned as if her very life hung on his reply.

He laughed an ugly, disagreeable laugh, that showed his white teeth beneath his heavy moustache.

"I?—why, I am an after-consideration; your ladyship's devoted servant, if you succeed. Will you drive with me this morning? Cleopatra is in harness, and impatient!"

She hesitated for a moment, flushing and trembling like a girl.

"Not if you will excuse me," she answered, at last; "it would subject me to gossip, and might do me harm."

He strode away without a word, and, sinking upon her couch, the proud woman buried her face in the cushions, and fell to sobbing.

"He's angry now," she cried, wringing her hands; "he's a tyrant, a cruel, heartless tyrant—yet I love him—I love him! Have I waited and hoped all these long years to fail now? Never! I lost him once! But mine he shall be this time. If I compass heaven and earth to accomplish my purpose. Though in my girlhood he did me the bitterest wrong that a woman ever suffers, mine he shall be yet. I have bartered my honour for his sake, and nothing shall deter me now. I will be mistress of Heathcote Abbey, and the Heathcote opal shall be my wedding-ring!"

Meanwhile the colonel descended the broad stairs and hurried out upon the terrace. At the foot of it he came face to face with Lady Grace. She was just returning from a walk, and her face was flushed and her tangled tresses blown over her shoulders like a shower of gold. The colonel saluted her, doffing his military cap with grave courtesy, then, as she retreated, he turned and gazed after her pliant, graceful figure, with a step and air like an antelope, her noble descent making itself manifest in every motion of her graceful head, in every intonation of her silvery voice, a beautiful bud of a most glorious blossom.

Gazing after this fair daughter of a hundred ears, a sudden thought thrilled through the colonel's brain, bringing the blood to his bronzed cheek in a fiery torrent.

"By Jupiter!" he exclaimed, "I deserve to be shot for my stupidity in wooing the mother when the daughter holds the purse. And a charming creature she is. Here, Turnout, you may take out the mare; I shall not drive this morning."

#### CHAPTER VI.

Hence, horrible shadow! Macbeth.  
Unreal mockery, hence!

"Why, auntie, are you going to Italy?"

Lady Grace had just emerged from her own apartments, where the packing of her trunks was going on under my lady's own eye, and had dropped into Seaton's room to have "a last little talk," as she expressed it.

They were to cross the channel on the morrow, spend a few weeks in Paris, and proceed thence to their winter quarters. She found her friend up to her very eyes in busy preparation.

"Certainly, my dear," she replied, curily, as she folded a steel-gray poplin, "unless your ladyship forbids it."

Grace opened her blue eyes wide in glad astonishment.

"I shall assuredly not do that," she cried. "I wanted you so much when I found I should have to go, and I entreated mamma to consent; but she insisted that you were too old, and would get sea-sick, and said I must take Celine instead. But I am so glad—so glad! Will you really go, nurse?"

"That I will," replied the nurse, decidedly. "Your mother put you in my arms a wee babe, and she's a-dying, and made me promise never to leave or forsake you; and I never will."

"Dear, kind nurse," cried the girl, throwing her arms around her neck, and kissing her over and over,

"how shall I ever repay you? What should I do? I had not you to love me, now that poor, dear papa is gone? Oh, auntie, my heart would surely break!"

The woman's strong, stern face softened with an expression of unutterable tenderness as she stroked and caressed the golden head that lay upon her knee.

"Never do thou fret, my little one," she said, consolingly; "old auntie will stick by you many a year yet. Heaven knows you need me, and it won't take me away. And do not trouble thy poor little heart for all these crooked things; will come straight in the end. Old auntie knows a thing or two, and she'll be all ready when the time comes. Only be patient, bonnie bird, and old auntie will keep off the hungry hawks."

Grace kissed her again, then, leaving her to finish her preparations, she strolled down to take a last look at the old place, and to bid farewell to her innumerable pets, before her departure. The afternoon was chill and gloomy. A dull gray shut in the sky, and the keen wind tossed about the dry leaves, and walked around the massive battlements, with a weird, ghostly sound. Gracie drew her mantle close, shivering with a nervous chill.

For half an hour perhaps she wandered about, now in the greenhouse, and amid her birds, and lastly down to the solemn graveyard.

Long and silently she leaned her head against the big marble stone above her father's grave, and at last, as the twilight shades began to gather, she arose with tear-wet cheeks and a dreary, aching heart, and retraced her steps towards the Abbey.

Slowly and sadly, as she went, she would walk, her eyes wandered over the grim old building. Far above the grim, gray turrets, in the dim, vague atmosphere, a few premonitory snow flakes began to flutter, and as she watched their uncertain dance something caught the girl's eye that pale her cheeks to the very hue of death.

Away up at a turret window, in a part of the building that had not been occupied for ages, closely pressed against the diamond panes of glass, she beheld a face—a white, weird, awful face—that surely belonged to no living mortal.

She stood still, her gaze fixed in a kind of horrible fascination, the ghastly, menacing thing seeming to watch her where she stood.

A quick step came something over the gravel, and Colonel Hershaw was at her side.

She wheeled quickly, and, seeing him, "Great Heaven, colonel!" she gasped, "what is that?" and dropped senseless at his feet.

The colonel, following her pointed finger, saw nothing but the barred turret window and the fluttering snow flakes, and, lifting her in his arms very tenderly, he bore her to my lady's boudoir.

They were to depart on the morrow, and, after looking into her darling's chamber, and assuring herself that she slept sweetly and quietly, Nurse Seaton hurried away to her own room to complete the few arrangements she had to make.

"Poor little dove," she murmured as she hurried down the dim corridor, "no wonder she dropped down so white and deathlike. They have worried her so; but I'll keep my eye on her. Madame Carliotta's got a long head, but she won't get the start of old Margaret. I can see what she's up to, but I'll be as sharp as she is. 'Twill be diamond out diamond between us two I'm thinking."

She paused suddenly in her rapid walk, looking down the corridor with dilating eyes.

An icy breath of air struck her as if some near door or window was open, and she grew awfully conscious of the near presence of something in the uncertain gloom.

A wild thrill of terror shot through her stout heart, and she was in the act of crossing to her own apartment when a low, taunting laugh broke on her ear.

She turned on the instant, peering into the shadowy darkness; and right before her, slowly advancing down the corridor, she beheld a tall, spectral figure, clad in white, its long, waving arms upraised in an attitude of horrid menace.

Margaret Seaton was a fearless woman, a stranger to all idle and nervous imaginings, but at sight of this unearthly thing the very heart within her seemed to die.

All the old stories of the Abbey ghost that she had heard long ago flashed through her mind; the icy chill seemed to freeze her into utter helplessness, and she stood rooted to the spot, faint with terror, her eyes strained upon the ghastly object.

Nearer and nearer it came, and all at once she heard another taunting laugh; a blinding blaze of light flashed before her eyes, a keen, cruel blow sent her reeling to the marble floor.

For one brief instant she struggled against the



death-like faintness that oppressed her, then she fell prostrate, a dead, unconscious weight.

## CHAPTER VII.

Now conscience wakes despair  
That slumbered, wakes the bitter memory  
Of what he was, what is, and what must be.

MILTON.

"My love, I have slipped in to see about your toilet. I desire you to brighten up a little. Take away that heavy bombazine, Celina, and bring the flounced crêpe; then fly down to the greenhouse and get some white camellias for your young lady's hair. Gracie, love, we are to have a visitor this evening. Can you guess who?"

Lady Grace sat in an immense arm-chair, wrapped in a cashmere robe. An open book was on her knee, but she was not reading; her eyes were fixed upon the seaward window in sad reflection. She looked up with a start at the sound of my lady's voice.

"Oh, mamma, is it you?" she said; "please what were you saying?"

Lady Heathcote laughed, and, crossing to one of the silken couches, threw herself down amid the cushions. They were at Brignoli Villa, an ancient, picturesque place, my lady's dowry from her first husband.

The very best room in the villa had been assigned to Grace by my lady's express command. Adjoining it was one reserved for my lady's daughter Beatrice, who was expected home from school in a fortnight.

These apartments were large and airy and old-fashioned, and furnished in a sumptuous style. Blue and gold were the prevailing tints in Grace's chamber, green and scarlet in that assigned to her sister. My lady was an artist in the question of harmonizing colours.

"My dear little girl," she said, with a ripple of silver laughter as she seated herself, "you really must give up dreaming, you are just a trifle too romantic and imaginative. I brought you here to grow strong and rosy, and here you are as wan and waken as a seashell. It won't do, Gracie, we must change our programme. We shall have your sister at home shortly, and though, of course," she added, raising her dainty handkerchief to her eyes, "I shall allow no mirth or festivity so soon after our—our—great loss, yet I wish to see you young people happy and healthy; and I trust, my dear, you will give up this foolish disposition to mope and make yourself miserable. But here comes Celina with the camellias, and that brings us to the point in question—your toilet and our visitor. You have not guessed his name, my dear."

A sudden thrill of terror shot through the girl's heart.

"Oh, mamma," she cried, looking up with piteous eyes, "is it—"

"The young Earl of Remington, my sweet," broke in her ladyship. "He has but just arrived, accompanied by his father, and I wish you to make your young lady look her very best, Celina."

The French maid chattered out a laughing assent, but Lady Grace rose to her feet with clasped hands and whitening cheeks.

"Mamma," she entreated, "have pity on me; I cannot, indeed I cannot see him."

"My dear child, pray do not be silly; he is the flower of the nobility, young, handsome, and heir prospective to a dukedom. How should you like to wear a ducal coronet, my dear?"

"Mamma, I cannot see this man; I will not," she added, with just the faintest suggestion of the slumbering Heathcote spirit blazing in her blue eyes.

"As you like, my love," responded her ladyship, carelessly, "but you remember your father's will."

Poor Gracie dropped back into her chair with a piteous, heart-broken cry; she had forgotten that. Oh, misery! and at that moment, hidden away in her jewel-case, was a brief note, scribbled just as the "Blue Heron" left her moorings, and a tiny, jewelled case, containing the semblance of a darling, youthful face, all aglow with love and aspiration. A girl's first love is so ardent and impetuous.

But her father's will!

The bare remembrance of it seemed to freeze her into a pallid statue, and without a word or a remembrance she suffered herself to be robbed for the sacrifice.

My lady conducted her into the long, low drawing-room, its vine-draped windows opening on a star-lit lake, and a soft wind, odorous with the sweets of pomegranates and orange-blossoms, and musical with the twitter of nightingales, pulsing through the dim garden aisles below.

She paused, a lovely Niobe, her black robes trailing to her feet, the white camellias blooming in her golden hair.

The Earl of Remington arose and advanced to meet her, bowing low and reverently over the little

hand that fluttered in his own; then he presented his son.

They had met before, in their childhood days, but as Lady Grace raised her eyes to his face she shuddered and drew back. She would never have known him.

He was not more than two-and-twenty, this prospective earl and heir to a dukedom, but his face wore the age and dissipated look of forty. He was evidently weary of pleasure and indulgence. But his dull eyes lit with a fierce gleam as they rested on her fair, girlish face, and he came forward eagerly, seizing her hand and pressing it to his lips.

Lady Grace shivered with the aversion that a refined woman always feels in the presence of such a man.

The earl frowned, and made a significant gesture to his son, which he did not heed, but continued to stare upon the loveliness before him. And this was the man that Lord Heathcote had chosen to wed with his daughter, and to bear his honoured name and title!

A deathlike pallor overspread the girl's face. She grew faint with agony and disgust. The room seemed to reel round her, and she staggered as if about to fall.

"Stand aside, you brute," cried the Indian officer, hotly, rushing to her side, "don't you see that her ladyship is fainting? Take care; let her have fresh air."

With a blending of chivalric gallantry, and ill-disguised self-interest, he drew the half-unconscious girl from the group that surrounded her and seated her in a cushioned chair beneath the low window. Then, catching up a crystal goblet, he held it to her lips. The cooling draught and the odorous evening air revived her on the instant, and she looked up, acknowledging his kindness with a grateful smile, which brought a fiery flush to the colonel's swarthy cheek.

Meanwhile Lady Heathcote had called the young earl's attention to some rare engravings, apologizing for Grace in the same breath, and begging him to overlook her childish foolishness; but while her words flowed serenely, and her dainty fingers rustled over the engravings, her black, basilisk eyes were covertly watching Colonel Hershaw, and taking note of every expression on his face, with a kind of lurid fire blazing up in their dusky depths.

"So that's his intention, is it?" she colloquized, an hour or two after, in her own chamber—"the two-faced, double-dyed traitor. He played me false in my girlhood, he made me what I am! For his sake I have stooped to dishonour, and now, for her baby prettiness, he would play me false again! Avenging Heaven! It never, never shall be! I'll let out his heart's blood with my own hand first."

Meanwhile Colonel Ludovic Hershaw matured his plans, and improvised his strategic moves and surprises, with as much deliberation as if he had been mapping out the ground-work of a battle.

The colonel was a bachelor, so he avowed; he had been a gay and dashing fellow in his day; many a pale-cheeked beauty in London and Paris cherished vivid recollections of this self-same Ludovic Hershaw when he was five-and-twenty, and captain of the Lanciers in Her Majesty's service. But that had all gone by; the colonel was two-score now at least, and had set his face toward better things.

He was a handsome man, and the blue blood of the old régime flowed in his veins, and, despite the somewhat dubious state of his financial matters, the colonel was a favourite in the first London circles. But, notwithstanding his free admittance into the grand drawing-rooms wherein assembled the flower and cream of the nobility, the colonel was growing weary of being merely an onlooker, and had been casting about him for some time on the watch for a chance to better his own fortunes, which, to tell the truth, were getting into rather a desperate state. But not even his nearest friends suspected such a thing, for the colonel dressed well, gave entertainments, sported fast horses, and drove a handsome curriole.

For a long time the colonel and Lady Heathcote had been fast friends—even before her marriage with Lord Heathcote they had been quite intimate—and when my lady was so suddenly left a disconsolate widow it was no more than the colonel's duty to comfort and console her. But of late, especially since the removal to Italy, this gallant veteran seemed to have changed his mind. All of a sudden his forces were drawn in and an entirely new assault was planned and carried into execution.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Hark! to the harried question of Despair:

"Where is my child?"—an echo answers "where?"

Byron.

WHEN Lord Malcolm Heathcote and Sir Ruthven Remington were fast friends and Oxford companions

Remington Court was one of the finest estates in England, and the two young noblemen spent their vacations alternately at the Court and at Heathcote Abbey. In the ardour of youthful friendship the two collegians made a vow, to be held as sacred as an oracle, that in the future, if they chanced to marry and be blessed with sons and daughters, the heir-at-law of Heathcote should wed the eldest daughter of Remington Court, and on the other hand the Earl of Remington was to take his wife from the house of Heathcote—thereby connecting two of the noblest and most powerful houses in the kingdom.

In course of time the dashing young Earl of Remington Court took for his wife Lady Laura Verney, one of the loveliest and proudest of England's daughters. They were wedded under the brightest auspices, and in due time a son was born unto them, heir of Remington Court. The christening was a magnificent affair, and my Lord Heathcote stood godfather for the little royal babe, which was called Heathcote Ruthven Remington, and the two friends renewed the vow of their boyhood.

In a year or two Lord Heathcote wedded himself with Lady Grace Delmar, and to them a babe was born—a daughter. Then there was another christening, though a sad and solemn one, for the mother of the heir to Heathcote Abbey had yielded up her own life in giving birth to her babe. The two friends shook hands and made a solemn pledge that the Earl of Remington and the little daughter of the Abbey should be man and wife.

But prior to the birth of Lord Heathcote's babe a shadow had dimmed the sunshine at Remington Court.

My Lady Remington, so the gossip ran, had lost her wits, or used them too sharply, which is about as bad. When her babe was six months old her ladyship was attacked with a dangerous illness, which confined her to her chamber for weeks. Meantime the young heir was tenderly cared for, and thrived as well as heart could wish.

But when my lady was past danger, and the babe was placed in her arms, she started up with a cry of horror, declaring it was not her child.

Of course it was deemed as an illusion of her illness, but the fancy strengthened with her strength. She would not suffer the babe to be brought into her presence, and frantically mourned the loss of her own child.

At first Sir Ruthven expostulated, and used every effort in his power to soothe and quiet her; but, seeing that she grew worse, and that her antipathy to the child grew stronger each day, being a passionate man, he lost his temper.

High words passed between my lady and himself; she accused him of treachery, and even hinted that he had connived at the abduction of his own babe and the substitution of another one in its place. Whereupon his lordship pronounced his wife a lunatic, which of course she was.

The upshot and end of all this were that my Lady Laura left both the babe and her husband, and went back to her father.

Sir Ruthven, heart-broken and disgraced, shut up Remington Court, and went down to an old estate called the Hermitage, situated somewhere near the Cornish coast. Here, with the aid of his maiden sister, Lady Emilia Remington, and an experienced nurse, he devoted himself to the rearing of his abandoned babe.

The child grew and thrived finely, but as its years increased it seemed to have bad blood in its veins. It defied restraint, developed all manner of alien tastes and traits, and grew up self-willed, brutal, and dissipated.

Separated from the wife he adored, and bitterly disgraced and disappointed in his only son, Sir Ruthven sank into premature old age, a hopeless, heart-broken man.

But his devotion to his wayward boy never wavered; he was his last earthly hope, and he clung to him with the energy of despair. He followed him from place to place, vainly hoping that his manhood would develop those traits in which his youth had been so deficient. But the boy went from bad to worse.

Despite all this, Lord Malcolm Heathcote, holding a promise too sacred a thing to be broken, made it his last will that this graceless young nobleman should be the husband of his only child, and master of Heathcote Abbey.

After this Sir Ruthven took renewed hope. If anything under Heaven could reclaim his poor boy it would be a union with that lovely girl.

Accordingly he set himself vigorously to work to bring about the consummation of his dead friend's wishes.

Meantime Lady Heathcote stood passive for the time being, and let the Fates work for her! She had laid out the warp and woof of her own life, but these weird sisters had taken the thread into their own hands, and were weaving the web after a different

pattern. But it would suit as well in the end, my lady thought. At any rate she would wait and see.

There was quite a pleasant party at Brignoli Villa, and the days, short and wintry, sped by almost unperceived to all perhaps save poor little Lady Grace. They were tedious enough to her. What with her unmitigated grief for the loss of her father, and her dreadful yearning for the old Abbey and for good Nurse Seaton, whose sudden disappearance was a terrible mystery, together with the noisy demonstrations of her intended husband, and the wily advances of Colonel Hershaw, and her great longing for tidings from the "Blue Heron," the poor child was half beside herself. Day by day she sat at her window, gazing out towards the purple olive groves, and heartily wishing herself safe and secure under the marble by her father's side.

In the spring she was to go to the Convent of the Sacred Heart to complete her studies, but the winter was to be a season of recreation.

Lady Heathcote filled her villa with brilliant guests. Besides her select friends, she had the Glandores from Glandore Court, and half a dozen gay, gallant, and handsome belles from Paris.

Of course there was nothing like festivity so soon after her dear lord's death; only morning drives, and now and then a sail, and once in a while a little quiet dancing in the long drawing-room that overlooked the sea.

In the midst of all this, just before the Christmas holidays, her daughter Beatrice came home.

#### CHAPTER IX.

But all was false and hollow, though his tongue  
Dropped manna, and could make the worst appear  
The better reason to perplex and dash  
Maturest counsels. *Milton.*

"My lord, allow me to present my daughter, Countess Beatrice Brignoli!"

The young Earl of Benington turned suddenly, and faced the young lady with a startled exclamation on his lips.

My lady watched them keenly, standing thus, a peculiar expression in her glittering eyes, and something very like a quiver about her haughty mouth.

A handsome pair they were, for the earl, despite his dissipated look, was by no means ill favoured; and Beatrice—all the fire and splendour of her own Italia seemed to glow and sparkle in her face.

Recovering his self-possession, the earl clasped the dainty hand she extended, bowing to the very hem of her floating robe, and expressing the pleasure he experienced in making her acquaintance. Then he looked up again, his eyes full of bold and undisguised admiration.

Beatrice blushed rosy red, and dropped her eyes abashed.

My lady still regarded them with that tremulous, peculiar gaze; and once her eyes actually filled with tears as they rested on the young man's face, and she put out her arm, as if a sudden yearning had seized her, to clasp him to her bosom. But the next instant she was calm and self-possessed.

"Ah, you will be good friends, I perceive," she said, tenderly, breaking in upon the little tide of small talk into which the two had drifted. "Come now, my dear, I must present you to Lord Glandore. Pardon, my lord—Lady Grace awaits you in the music-room."

The earl bit his lip and muttered as he strode away:

"Horribly cool move that! She's a high-stepping filly! If it wasn't for the Heathcote treasures I think I'd wade right in. Venus! but she is glorious! She far excels little Heathcote."

Meanwhile he had reached the music-room, and, seeing Grace at the piano, he hastened to her side.

"Ah, my dear," he said, bending over her, and letting his arm rest upon her shoulder, "I've been looking for you this hour. How can you be so heartless as to hide away from me when you know I only exist in your presence?"

Grace arose to her feet, shaking off his hand as if its touch burned her.

"I was not hiding, my lord; the music-room is open to all," she said, coldly.

"But you do hide from me, my sweet, and you cannot deny it. Only yesterday, when I chanced to see you from the window, in one of your rustic retreats, I hurried down to join you, but you eluded me, and buried yourself somewhere amid the orange groves. Dare you deny it?"

He bent his head while he was speaking, and his hot breath, reeking with a mixed odour of wine and cigars, swept her cheek.

She drew back in undisguised disgust.

"My lord," she answered, quietly, but with a swift, scintillating flash in her blue eyes, "I am mistress of my own actions, and permit no person to call them in question. And, allow me to add, I suffer no one to intrude upon my seclusion unasked and undesired."

"Not even your chosen husband?" he sneered, with an ugly expression distorting his lip.

"No, sir, not even my wedded husband, did such a man exist."

With this plain and emphatic answer she made him a stately, chilling courtesy, and swept away, with a haughty, queen-like air.

The young nobleman watched her down the long room, his dull, leaden eyes emitting a kind of greenish glow.

"The insolent little vixen," he muttered, drawing a deep breath, "I wonder if she thinks I am going to be done out of the Heathcote heritage by her airs! Not I, my dainty beauty; you shall be mine all in good time, then we'll see if that fiery spirit cannot be broken. These headstrong illins make the best kind of nags when they get used to the bit."

Having indulged in this morose and sage philosophy, he turned to look for the young Countess Beatrice, but she was doing the gracious to young Lord Glandore, who seemed to be smitten at first sight; and the earl, very much angered and terribly bored, was compelled perforce to cross over and play the gallant to a little Parisian belle, who was coquetting at him from behind her ivory fan in the most unmistakable manner.

My Lady Heathcote watched this little scene from the embrasure of a draped window, and comprehended its every point.

A hot glow leaped to her cheeks and burned in her eyes.

"She will refuse him," she muttered, with clenched teeth. "Let her do it, let her dare think of wedding another. 'Tis only for his sake I have spared her life thus far. Let her refuse to marry him, and her doom is sealed!"

A sound of suppressed sobbing reached her ear, cutting short her wrathful tirade, and she held her breath to listen.

Cautiously parting the curtain, she looked down upon the terrace below.

A new moon hung like a silver crescent in the sky, and she could discern a slender figure, clad in dusky garments, bending over the balustrade, and sobbing in the very abandonment of woe.

Her hands were clasped, and the pale, young face looked heavenward, and she moaned piteously in a voice like that of a grieved child.

"Oh, father, dear, precious father! why cannot I come to thee? This life is so dark, and the grave would be so safe and sweet. But I do not blame you; you did not mean to pain me—in your great love for your poor child you sought to shield her from all sorrow; but, oh, it was a mistake, a terrible mistake! Oh, pitying Heaven, have mercy upon me, for my trial is sore!"

Stealing along the edge of the terrace, with the lithe and noiseless step of a panther in the jungle, came the figure of a man, dimly revealed in the pallid lustre of the silver moon, and it was this figure that my lady watched with gleaming eyes and bated breath.

The girl continued to weep and sob, sinking to a kneeling posture, and dropping her head upon her folded arms.

"My poor little girl," spoke the figure, gaining her side, and laying his hand lightly on her golden head, "is there nothing I can do comfort you?"

The voice, low almost as the silken murmur of the breeze, still reached my lady's ear, making her start as if a dagger had pierced her, albeit she knew too well, by her own unerring instincts, who the figure was.

Lady Grace bounded to her feet with a little shriek or terror, then, catching a glimpse of the man's face, she cried:

"Oh, Colonel Hershaw, how you did frighten me." The colonel looked down into the lovely, tear-wet face.

"I beg your pardon a thousand times, my lady," he said, humbly, removing his cap, and standing before her. "I was wrong to intrude myself upon you, but the sight of your sorrow pained me so—I wanted to comfort you, Lady Grace, my dear little girl. I am an old man, old enough to be your father; will you suffer me to be your friend? I have noticed you day by day, and I see how you are grieved and harassed. My child, I might help you, if you would trust me."

Grace dropped her face into her hands, and began sobbing afresh.

"Oh, Colonel Hershaw!" she said, "no one can help me. My heart is broken. All that I loved on earth is gone, and nothing remains to me but death. Ah! if it would only come!"

The colonel stood silent a moment, softly passing his hand across her shining hair.

"My dear child," he replied, at last, "we all feel this when our tender feet first begin to tread life's rugged way, but after a while we get used even to the sharp rocks and ruts. I know all about it, little

one. Take my word for it—no fate is so fixed that it may not be conquered. You must take heart, my dear, and be a brave girl for the sake of the proud old name you bear. Your dear father made a mistake in his will, I confess, but he could not foresee it. Do you really think, my child, if he were alive, and here, your pure-minded father, he would wish you to marry that profligate young man, and make him lord of Heathcote Abbey?"

Grace ceased sobbing, lifted her golden head, and fixed her tear-dimmed eyes upon the distant stars in solemn inquiry, as if she would put the question to the redeemed soul that dwelt within the golden walls of the Celestial City.

"Assuredly not, my dear child. The young man's immorality, his low habits and disgusting vices, make null and void that unfortunate clause in your father's will. So take courage, my dear, and don't fret any more now. I believe in trusting to chance—something will occur to make you see your way out of these troubles. Now look up and tell me if I have not comforted you just a little?"

Lady Grace arose, and pushed back her dishevelled tresses.

"I believe you have, Colonel Hershaw," she replied, "and I thank you sincerely."

"I am so glad," continued the colonel, delightedly; "and now will you not take a little stroll in the greenhouse—'tis growing damp here—besides, my lady has some wondrous flower in bloom that blossoms only once in a century."

Grace was on the point of yielding; she even put out her hand to accept his arm; but a sudden, undefinable thrill of distrust and aversion, inspired by something she saw in the man's dimly revealed face, caused her to draw quickly back.

"No, colonel; not to-night," she said. "I am going to my room now. Good night!"

"I can wait, my pretty bird!" muttered the colonel, thrusting his hands into his pockets and sauntering down the terrace.

Lady Heathcote emerged from her hiding-place and glided away into the shadows of an ante-room with a face like death.

"Girl," she hissed, shaking her clenched fist with bitter menace at some imaginary object, "your doom is sealed. For his sake I would have spared you; now all the gold in the universe could not buy your life!"

(To be continued.)

**DR. LIVINGSTONE'S SON GOING IN SEARCH OF HIS FATHER.**—At a recent meeting of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce a letter was read from one of Dr. Livingstone's sons, asking that chamber to take an interest in the expedition to search for his father. The chamber cordially agreed to recommend a subscription towards the expenses of the undertaking now being made in Glasgow to its individual members and to the general public. It was stated that the second son of Dr. Livingstone, who is studying for the medical profession at Glasgow, has become so anxious about the safety of his father that he has left for London to offer himself as a volunteer in the expedition.

**CANINE SAGACITY.**—Some dogs possess a singular knack of hunting out anything that has recently been in the possession of their masters. There is one ludicrous anecdote of this faculty, which, we fear, is too good to be true. A gentleman made a bet that a dog would identify a franc that he had thrown down upon the Boulevards. Before the dog had discovered the money a passer-by had picked it up. Presently the dog caught the scent, followed the stranger to his hotel, remained with him all day, and attended him to bed, to the great delight of his newly constituted master, who was extremely flattered by his sudden attachment. But the moment the gentleman pulled off his pantaloons, in the pocket of which he had placed the franc, the dog barked at the door, as if desirous to get out. The door was opened, the dog caught up the vestment, and rushed away to his rightful owner.

**THE PRESERVATION OF ELEPHANTS.**—The *Madras Athenæum* says the local government have determined to prevent the wanton and indiscriminate destruction of elephants now only too common. In a minute by his lordship the governor Lord Napier is of opinion "that the enactment of a law for the preservation of an animal so useful for the purposes of labour and so indispensable in India to military operations can be justified on grounds altogether different from those which may be urged in favour of a law for the preservation of flying game or the boasts of the chase. It is strictly a matter of public policy to prevent the extermination of the elephant, a result which it is feared might be attained at no distant date in the forests and mountain ranges of this Presidency should some defensive regulations not be adopted." An act will probably be laid before the Legislative Council at the next meeting with this object.





[A TREATY OF PEACE.]

## VICTOR AND VANQUISHED.

## CHAPTER VIII.

He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf.

*Shakespeare.*

IF Hereward had not been filled with disagreeable surprise by this message of the valet, he would have laughed outright at Slygreen, who, first facing him with blinking eyes, puckered cheeks, and enormous tongue lolling out, turned to the messenger with gravity, and followed him, slyly mimicking his foppish step.

As soon as the door had been locked behind them Watt nudged Monsieur L'Ombre in the ribs and stared up at him vindictively.

"Keep your distance, sir!" cried the valet, with dignity. "How dare you jostle his lordship's confidential servant?"

"Oh, you're a fine villain," returned Watt; "how many times a day does your master flog you?"

"You—impertinent knave!" cried L'Ombre, "how dare you?"

"How dare you?" mimicked Watt, in precisely the same pompous tone; "and who are you? His Imperial Highness the Emperor of France, or a lackey, who, if he gets his wages paid, is luckier than most puppies? So you had to tell a falsehood about his lordship, my master, had you?"

"His lordship? Come now, don't you think me a very credulous person indeed? Ha, ha! I thought you a knave, but find you to be an idiot."

"Did I say his lordship?" cried Watt, with an excellent imitation of alarm. "I didn't mean that, and if he hears it he'll flay me alive."

The valet, credulous despite his vaunt, glanced at Slygreen very curiously as he admitted him into the baron's presence.

Chastelard received him with great blandness, and, musingly fingering a gold coin, examined him with a sinister smile.

"You see I can understand a hint," said the old man, "and am quite ready to reward an honest fellow—who would let me into the plots of a scoundrel."

"Your lordship," returned Watt, with extreme deference, "if you mean my master, indeed he is that, or worse, the young madcap, and if your lordship would just bind him hand and foot, and send him home to his sorrowful family, you would get more than thanks, I promise you, from the duke himself."

At this speech the baron sat dumbfounded, staring at Watt, who returned his gaze with owl-like earnestness.

"What duke do you mean?" asked Chastelard, at last.

As Watt had not yet thought out his story he slid on tip-toe to the door, and looked through the keyhole in search of eavesdroppers; then he lifted the heavy curtains which clothed the massive windows, and returned to the baron apparently satisfied.

"I hope that your lordship will remember that I am but a poor valet, dependent upon the smiles or frowns of my master for subsistence, and that you will keep secret whatever I confide to you." Here he put his finger on his lip.

The baron nodded his head, and said:

"I understand. Go on now."

"The Duke de Chamounel," whispered Watt, "who, your lordship must know, is immensely wealthy, owns this young firebrace as his son, but, since he has had a duel with one of his brother guardsmen, and killed him, he's had to fly; and here he is, getting into all sorts of scrapes, a-breaking of his grace's heart—for, you know, it's his humour to hide his own name and assume another."

The baron listened to all this with ill-concealed incredulity, but, eye as sharply as he might the goblin-faced fellow before him, he could detect nothing but the most simple good faith.

"I never heard that the Duke de Chamounel had a son," said he.

"Nor I that there was a Duke de Chamounel!" thought Slygreen.

"And, my fine fellow, I fear your story won't hold well together. Your master bears a strong resemblance to a certain foe of mine, whom I thought dead years ago; if this young man prove to be his son I warn you that he will meet with no gentle handling from me. What have you to say to that?"

"Why, your worshipful lordship, his grace the duke never picked a quarrel with anybody in his life, and Heaven knows where his son gets all his hot tempers from, but you see—"

"I don't want to hear of his grace the duke," interrupted Chastelard, angrily; "what have you to say in explanation of your master's haranguing the rioters down at Kentigern last night, and allowing himself to be elected their leader?"

"Who told you that, your lordship?"

"Miss Chastelard's groom, who mingled with the mob to see the ringleader they had chosen, and he heard the whole of Master Hereward's speech in Jeffroy's inn."

Watt placed his hands on his sides, and shrieked out laughing.

"What do you mean, rascal?" demanded the baron, both angry and curious.

"Why, your lordship," cried Watt as soon as he could speak, and wiping the tears from his eyes with obtrusive zeal, "that was all a freak of his to cheat the silly dolts. Anybody that wasn't an idiot, who heard his speech, might have known that. Your lordship's servant must have had a head as thick as a Hottentot's to be taken in by my lord's bit of fun. What else could he do but to pay them off for mobbing him at the inn because he saved your lordship's daughter?"

"You have a ready wit, you rogue, but I am not easily deceived. What have you to say in defence of the conversation which my valet heard between you and your master this morning?"

"Things are apt to get a twist that come through keyholes," said the man, calmly, "and I don't know that Mr. Lumber is a very trustworthy person. I saw him selling a silver inkstand and a pair of snuff-ers to a pedlar down in the inn-yard."

As he spoke, with a rapid catch well known to jugglers, he whisked the articles in question from the buffet by which he was standing, and slipped them into his pocket.

"What?" cried the old man, "does L'Ombre dare to steal my property? He shall hear of this immediately."

Red with indignation, he rang a silver hand-bell, and the valet appeared with his usual sleek demeanour.

"Go and fetch me my inkstand and a pair of snuff-ers," said the baron, imperiously.

L'Ombre looked over the tables with a genteel air, and brought a glass inkstand.

"Is that what I asked for?" roared Chastelard; "where are they?"

The valet looked bewildered.

"If your lordship is not in a hurry, I will search for them."

"You will?" said Chastelard. "And, where, pray? You thieving villain—don't I know that you have sold them, and Heaven knows what else beside?"

"Monsieur le Baron," cried the valet, "who accuses me?"

"That man," said Chastelard, pointing to Watt Slygreen, who, with a wonderful gravity, watched this scene.

The Frenchman instantly poured forth a stream of asseverations and denials, to which Watt replied by the most audacious accusations.

The end of the disturbance was that L'Ombre was ordered to produce the missing articles within twenty-four hours, or leave the baron's service; then he was dismissed.

"I don't know but you're an honest creature," said Chastelard, with more confidence than he had hitherto displayed, "and I can make it amply worth your while to be useful to me. If your master should have any evil intentions towards me—remember, though you're an honest fellow and don't know anything amiss with him just now, you might—I'll reward you with the mate of this for every bit of useful information."

He held out the piece of gold, which Watt, with a stupid grin on his wide mouth, received and crammed into his deepest pocket.

"Your lordship shall be served faithfully," chuckled he; "and I don't care if Lord Hereward should flog me for telling you of his scrape; a piece of gold like this isn't to be picked up every day."

"Tush!" cried the baron, frowning, "do you still persist in your story of Lord Hereward and his scrape? You are a greater blockhead than I take you for if you do not cease these meaningless assertions and confess that your master is a son of Henry Kentigerna, once lord of this barony."

"Honoured sir, I know nothing about that; but if you don't believe me you've only to write to the duke himself, and if you don't believe him—why, sure, baron, I'll think you're mad! Lord Hereward a Kentigerna! Who ever heard the like?"

"Why lie so like the late Baron of Kentigerna?" persisted Chastelard, still unconvinced.

But Watt could give him no help here. He scratched his huge head, and looked puzzled. Chastelard, with all his art, could not decide whether to believe him or not. If this story of the Duke de Chamontel was true it would never do for him to restrict the liberty of his son. If not, how could he prove the other suspicion?

Foiled and miserable, he pretended to be satisfied, and sent Watt back to his master with a promise to give them both the liberty of the tower until he should communicate with Chamontel.

"Well, what was my lord baron's business with you, Watt?" asked Hereward, eagerly, as soon as they were locked in together again.

His follower began a sort of Pyrrhic dance round the apartment, and ended by reversing himself in a corner.

"Cease these mountebank antics," said the youth, laughing in spite of himself—in truth Master Hereward from his infancy had laughed at Slygreen's jokes and capers, and the habit had grown upon him—"and tell me the cause of your merriment."

"You're an honest fellow, Slygreen; here's a piece of gold," mocked the dwarf, coming right side up, and drawing on a long face, shrivelling his eyes, and peaking his nose and chin.

And he strutted up and down, holding between his finger and thumb the baron's donation.

"Was that it?" cried Hereward, "and did the old rascal think to bribe you?"

"Yes, master," said Watt, relapsing into solemnity, "and I hope you won't be angry with me; but I've told all."

"Have you, indeed, you rogue?" laughed Hereward.

"You're the only son of the Duke de Chamontel, from Heaven knows where, who has pistolled a rival and had to run for it. So, my Lord Hereward, I salute you."

"You knave, what have you been doing?"

"Well, master, when old Crossbones talked of rewarding me if I'd let him into the plots of a scoundrel like yourself—saving your presence, sir—I had to say something, hadn't I? and I told him about your being the Duke de Chamontel's son, and the duel with a guardsman—you're a lieutenant in the guards, sir—and about you travelling about under the plain name of Mr. Hereward, until the row should be forgotten—and your father's grief, and so on—"

"Why, you foolish old creature, Chastelard can disprove this story utterly. The Duke de Chamontel is the Belgian ambassador, and his seat is near London."

"All right, master, but by the time the baron sends to London and back—" and he winked expressively.

"You mean that we shall have escaped? Well, we can but try."

"Hurrah!" cried Slygreen, "and he's going to give us the liberty of the tower until he sees about it; we'll escape in no time."

Hereupon he recounted the whole of his interview with Chastelard.

#### CHAPTER IX.

A fair face and a tender voice had made me mad and blind.  
E. B. Browning.

The next morning Hereward and his man were conducted into the presence of the Baron de Chastelard, who blandly informed them that the tower and its grounds, as far as the moat, were to be considered free to them.

"Thanks," returned Hereward, bowing sarcastically. "Could I recognize your right to curtail my liberty I should admire your leniency."

"Your servant has informed me who you claim to be," said the baron, "and as there is some little incongruity between his statements and yours—"

"My servant's assertions are nothing to me. In the absence of any legal warrant, I demand my liberty."

"Fair and softly, young sir; one must not be rashly generous with a suspected person. You shall remain here in honourable captivity until I have sifted the truth of your servant's communication."

"Be it so, baron," cried the youth, hotly; "and I shall end my imprisonment as soon as the opportunity arrives."

At this Watt made a gesture of agony, and by his enormous eyes seemed to implore caution.

"In that case," said Chastelard, with a grim smile, "we must send you back to your strong room again. I had intended to give you the liberty of the tower on parole."

"And so you shall, good sir baron," interrupted Watt, unable any longer to restrain his dismay at the turn affairs were taking; "he'll pledge his honour—we'll both undertake to stay with you as long as your lordship pleases. Don't drive him, don't. That's why he killed the guardsman. Heaven protect me—what am I saying?"

"Silence!" said Hereward, impatiently; "your fooleries are ill-timed."

"So they are, good Lord Hereward. I'm a poor, long-tongued idiot. Oh, if you had only listened to the duke, your father, and kept from duelling, you would not be a prisoner in Kentigerna Tower this day."

Chastelard, keenly scrutinizing the faces of his two captives, grew more and more puzzled. Nothing could exceed the fearful earnestness of the servant; nothing could be more genuine than the impatient anger of the master.

It seemed, indeed, true that this was some reckless sprig of nobility who had entangled himself in a deadly quarrel, and now sought to hide himself from retributive vengeance, and his affairs from too close examination.

Chastelard found himself in a very delicate position, and, being such a detestable coward, was filled with panic lest he should affront a power superior to his own.

"Give me your word of honour not to leave the tower for three days," said he, in a conciliatory tone, "and you shall be treated as my guest. You have nothing to fear as a son of the Duke de Chamontel."

"I refuse your insulting proposition," exclaimed Hereward, folding his arms.

At this moment the door of an inner room behind the baron, which had been ajar, was opened wide, and within the chamber appeared Lucia de Chastelard, who made a rapid signal to attract Hereward's attention.

He looked—she clasped her small hands with an entreating air, and her eyes, flashing with intelligence, besought him to accede to her father's wishes.

The youth dropped his glance, a burning flush dyed his brow, but, beyond a chivalrous gesture, he remained outwardly impassive.

"Well, as for me," cried Watt, losing none of this bye-play, "I've no mind to be shut up when your lordship is so condescending as to offer me a snug corner of the kitchen, and my lord here will soon listen to reason when his old servant has left him alone. On the honour of an honest fellow as ever lacqued a noble lord, I'll stay in the tower till your lordship bids me go."

"For three days only, young gentleman," persuaded the baron; "surely you can have no mission so urgent as to call you away before that time?"

"Baron, if you detain me here it shall be by force."

"Very well, Lord Hereward, or whoever you are, I doubt not I shall be able to justify my course of action to your family when they require it. You shall return to your apartment."

Again Miss Chastelard appeared in the doorway, and this time her brilliant eyes were full of tears as she signed to him imperiously to accede.

At sight of those quivering tears Hereward's heart melted to dismay. Could he grieve so gentle a creature? By heaven these tears were the sharpest reproaches he had ever felt!

"Stay!" exclaimed he, impulsively, "I give you my word not to attempt to leave the tower for three days."

The baron heard him in triumph, and Watt added his voluble assurances as to his master's good faith.

Their word was taken, and Hereward was ceremoniously invited to dine with his host and Miss Chastelard that evening. Then he was at liberty to wander over the old rooms at his will.

The youth soon found himself in the uninhabited part of the tower, gazing through one of the embrasures where once the barons of Kentigerna had poured forth defiance and death upon their enemies; and as he moodily viewed the savage scene of cliff and sea below he heard the light sound of a woman's foot on the echoing flags; and he turned more moodily still from the sound, though his heart began to beat high.

"Master Hereward, Master Hereward," cried the baron's daughter, "what an errant knight you are! I thought I should find you here."

She came like a beautiful vision, smiling-faced, and gavelled her hand with a mock-reproachful air; and if she had envied him in her disordered dress, when with dishevelled hair and tear-washed face she clung to him for safety, how could he withstand her now when the delicate countenance was wreathed in smiles and mantling bloom?

"Madam," said the youth, gently, "why should you seek a gloomy companion like me? I have nothing but sighs to give in return for your gracious smiles."

"Are we so distasteful to you?" cried the lady, pouting her beautiful lips; "is it death to you to stay three days at Kentigerna Tower?"

"As a prisoner, Miss Chastelard."

"I will make you forget that," said she, less gaily. "I shall smother the chains with flowers."

"You will only succeed in loading me with more chains," returned Hereward, in a low voice, then, flinching at his own boldness, he dared not look at her.

But she laughed and shook her pretty finger at him; then she grew graver even than he.

"How can I make amends to you for my father's insults?" murmured she, in a tremulous voice.

"Lady, you have already made amends by your condescension."

"You, who rendered me so deep a service, to be accused of treachery," continued Lucia de Chastelard, tears beginning to sparkle in those hazel eyes.

"Do not weep for me," cried Hereward, with quick chivalry; "dear lady, these tears reproach me with my awkwardness."

"Will you forgive my father? He is old and timid; his people often plot against him, and it makes him suspicious."

"I will never visit his crimes upon the head of Lucia de Chastelard."

"His crimes? Alas! how harshly you speak."

"Lady, on my knees I implore your pardon; he is your father."

"I cannot defend his injustice—but his crimes, Mr. Hereward, that is a terrible word."

"Sweet lady, do not weep. I will retract that word."

"You are a cruel knight," said Miss Chastelard, dashing away her tears with a quivering smile; "and I think you love to torture me. If you only knew that my father's fears work upon him till they make him desperate you would not defy him as you did this morning."

"Lady, I would never have yielded to him but—"

"But what, you wilful creature?"

"But for love of you!"

The words blushed him with confusion. What would she think of his boldness? He glanced hurriedly at her, almost expecting to see her turn from him with the step of a queen.

But no, her carnation lips were trembling with arch dimples, she looked half-defiance, half-surprise; then she tapped him on the lips with a rose which she had plucked from a wild rose-tree in the grounds.

"Saucy boy!" cried she, and laughed until an owl from its hole in the turret looked down to see, and a raven flew from over their heads in affright.

"I would do anything when Miss Chastelard clasps her hands and appeals to me with tears," said the youth, looking at her with rapture.

"There—you learn too quickly," cried Lucia, with a slight blush. "I will not hear another gallant speech to-day. Besides, you must have been mistaken. I only signed to you a little earnestly that you might not mistake my meaning. Now I am going to prove your sincerity already; you said you would do anything under certain pressure from me. Must I weep and clasp my hands to induce you to lay aside your hostility towards my father while you remain here?"

Al! you frown and look so severe that I wonder how I could ever have thought you generous. Go! you will do nothing for Lucia de Chastelard."

She pushed him from her, gazing at him with an expression of great sorrow in her beautiful eyes.

"Madam, your smiles and reproaches are alike omnipotent with me," exclaimed Hereward, seizing her fragile hand. "I promise to obey you; I shall forget that the Baron de Chastelard and I—enough, beautiful lady, you have mastered me."



His speaking eyes met hers—she blushed and smiled. Oh, moment of triumph! he kissed her hand with a passionate fervour which told how fast the youth was ripening. She broke away from him, and fled, half coyly, out into the sunshine, and away to the Italian garden.

Hereward, too uncertain of himself to follow, dazzled by her witchery, yet already repenting his concessions to her, returned to his apartment to dream of his exquisite mistress.

Meantime Slygreen had been by no means blind to the advantages of his enlargement. He had made the acquaintance of the baron's kitchenful of French servants, with a celerity and versatility of genius which were truly surprising. He had amused them by his wit, coaxed them by his flatteries, endeared himself to them by his ready-handed assistance, and been victorious over L'Ombre in a battle of abuse, in which that gentleman sought to defend the honesty of his character.

In a word Watt was busy.

About an hour before the dinner hour he came up to attend upon his master, fuller of importance than ever.

"What now?" asked Hereward, noticing at length that the creature was trying all in his power to attract his attention.

"Nothing, master, but when you have done with me I would like leave, if you please, to go and keep an appointment."

"You keep an appointment! With whom, my man?"

"A—a lady, sir."

"Good Heavens, Watt, have you turned a gallant? I've done with you now; I wouldn't have you break your word to a lady for the world."

"Ah, there you give! But why shouldn't I have my sweethearts? I'm not such an ill-looking fellow, Master Hereward; and I tell you what, I've turned the head of the prettiest woman I ever saw in my life."

"Indeed! I never thought you had an eye for pretty women, Watt. Who is this one?"

"Ah! you shall see her—such a beauty; such lips; such bright eyes. She's waiting for me in the kitchen court; we'll take a walk together in Miss Chastelard's garden while you are at dinner—that is, if your honour will give me permission."

"Oh, you may go, if Miss Chastelard will lend her garden to such a pair of love-birds; but remember, Watt, I'll have no unceremonious pranks played which might grieve Miss Chastelard."

"By the gods of Venus—no!" ejaculated Watt, piously. "Do you take me for a brute? My admiration for the baron's daughter is only surpassed by yours. Bless her, she's as quick as a mouse! Didn't she save you from being locked up by a little clever posturing? I'd bet a pigeon-pie to an old hat that she's as taken with you as my little Gabrielle is with me. Come now, master, wouldn't you like to see my elect?"

"I will confess to some curiosity."

"Well, if you'll just follow me to a window in the upper gallery that looks on to the kitchen court you shall see how fond she is of me."

Always good-humoured, young Hereward took his station at the window designated, and saw a young woman sitting on a broken slab which once had held the inscription over the chapel door.

"There she is," grinned the dwarf. "Isn't she lovely? Oh! you beauty—oh, you angel!"

"Why, Watt, I don't think you could have picked out a harder-featured woman among a hundred," cried Hereward; "what in the wide world are you up to now?"

"Humph! master, you suppose my feelings are as tough as my skin! It's not the fattest goose lays the most eggs, and Mademoiselle Gabrielle, though a little homely, will prove your best friend. May I go? Methinks I see a cloud on your fair brow."

"Go, in Heaven's name! Why, the woman looks like a harridan!"

So Watt went downstairs with much alacrity, and his young master stood by the window, choking with laughter to see him mince across the yard, offer his arm to the young woman, and lead her away with the most exaggerated politeness and gallantry.

(To be continued.)

MR. HOESMAN, M.P., in his speech at Lisleard, stated that the Government had altered the title of the Licensing Bill, and that in the coming session it would be introduced as the "Wholesome Bodily Refreshment Sociable Health Renovation Potation Bill."

A YEAR'S VIOLENT DEATHS.—The New York Tribune presented its readers on New Year's Day with a column of statistics setting forth in detail the number and nature of the violent deaths which had occurred in that city during the year just closed. The total reaches 1,314, or a weekly average of 25.

Of these, the largest number come under the head of "falls," 311 persons having met their deaths either by falling themselves, or being fallen upon; 179 were drowned, and 115 killed by being run over in the streets. Of 108 suicides 19 hung themselves, 22 shot themselves, 8 cut their throats, 23 poisoned themselves, 27 drowned themselves, and 4 jumped from windows. The Germans appear upon the face of the statistics of New York most prone among nations to self-murder, though, of course, the comparison involves a consideration of the relative numbers of foreigners resident in the city. There were among the suicides 34 Germans, 20 Americans, 19 Irish, 14 English, 5 French, 2 Scotch, 2 Danish, 2 Canadian, and 1 Cuban. Poisoning is, as the figures show, the favourite means of self-destruction; and, going farther into details, we find that with the women a stuff called "Paris green" is the most popular poison. Of the 14 female suicides who poisoned themselves not fewer than ten effected their purpose by this agency. One man poisoned himself with a dose of strychnine and 8 took prussic acid; but narcotics appear to be the poisons most affected by male suicides, 14 of the 24 returned having taken this class of poison. As compared with the statistics of the preceding year, 1871 shows an advance of 33 over the roll of 1870. But this is more than accounted for by the two items of the explosion of the steamer "Westfield," and the 12th of July riot, the one resulting in the deaths of 84 persons, and the other of 53.

## SCIENCE.

THE largest iron casting ever attempted has been successfully achieved at the Elswick Ordnance Works, Newcastle-on-Tyne, under the direction of Sir William Armstrong and Captain Noble. It was a huge anvil block, weighing 135 tons, to be used with a 20-ton double-action forgerhammer, for performing the necessary forging for the 35-ton Armstrong gun.

SPRINKLER'S STONE PULVER.—This is a new vehicle for lifting heavy stones and other things from the ground and conveying them a suitable distance. When the machine is to be used for lifting, blocks are placed in front of the wheels to prevent them from turning. The animals which are yoked to the tongue are then started ahead, and swing a lever whose long arm was first in a vertical position. In being thus moved the lever causes a chain to hang on the end of its short arm, and thereby carries it up with the load. A very powerful leverage is thus obtained. When the long arm of the lever has been swung down it is caught and the load locked in its elevated position by means of a spring catch. The tongue slides outward, without drawing on the axle, while power is thus applied for lifting, but is otherwise locked in the bar by a suitable bolt or pin.

THE PRUSSIAN TORPEDO BOATS.—We read in the Königsberger Zeitung an interesting account of the Prussian torpedo boats, three of which are already finished, and in the port of Dantzig; three unfinished, destined for Kiel; and a number more under construction. These boats are cigar-shaped, and shot-proof against the rifle or mitrailleuse. In the bows is the rudder, and in the stern an observatory with a peep-hole about the size of a thaler, the funnel, hardly three feet above water and of very small diameter, the stock of fuel, and the engine and cabins. The whole boat is about forty feet long, and the only parts above water are the funnel and observatory. The bridge is on a level with the water and protected by a double shield. The boat is of gray colour, and very fast. It will carry torpedoes whose construction is unknown, dash into an enemy's fleet, especially at night, blow up the ship, and make away again. Should it prove a good sea-going boat, and England ever dare to thwart Germany, the prediction in the "Battle of Dorking" will probably be realized.

NEW USE OF THE HYDRATE OF CHLORAL.—Since the production of hydrate of chloral in considerable quantity we occasionally hear of its accidental use in chemical manufacture. There are important compounds of acetic acid (not popularly known, but of considerable value, especially in medicine) which can be derived from the new hypnotic, chloral—for example, trichloroacetic acid. A mixture of hydrate of chloral with three times its weight of fuming nitric acid is allowed to stand in the direct sunlight for three or four days until red fumes no longer appear. It is then distilled with thermometer, and, as soon as the temperature remains constant at 195 degs. C., the product is saved, and proves to be pure trichloroacetic acid. This interesting compound solidifies at 44 degs. C., and fuses again at 52 degs. C. Three hundred grammes of the pure acid were obtained from forty-eight grammes of the hydrate of chloral. Dichloroacetic acid, a liquid resembling acetic acid, is one of the best agents for burning off warts and similar excrescences that we possess. Within a few years

numerous compounds of acetic acid have been invented, for which some use ought to be suggested; among them is the trichloroacetic acid described above.

DETERMINATION OF SULPHUR AND PHOSPHORUS IN IRON.—The presence of the least trace of phosphorus and sulphur in iron will destroy it for many purposes, and a correct and easy way of detecting these substances is therefore of importance. K. Meinelke dissolves the finely pulverized iron in chloride of copper, separates the reduced copper by treatment with an excess of chloride of copper and common salt, filters through a layer of asbestos, brings the insoluble portions adhering to the asbestos into a beaker glass, and oxidizes by strong nitric acid and chloride of potash; then he evaporates with hydrochloric acid and determines the sulphur by baryta, as sulphate, and the phosphorus by molybdic acid in the usual way. The novelty of this method is in the substitution of chloride of copper for the chloride of iron employed by other chemists, and its advantages are said to be in the greater facility with which the various liquids and solutions can be filtered. It also yields more accurate results than the former methods.

EXPERIMENTS WITH GUN COTTON.—Some experiments for showing an improved quality of gun cotton, as made by Mr. Punshon, took place at Wormwood Scrubs recently. Mr. Punshon claims to be able to produce a gun cotton of any required explosive quality, so as to suit any purpose for which it may be wanted, and at the same time ensure perfect uniformity of manufacture. He also claims that by his treatment the difficulty of stowage is got rid of, and that his gun cotton may be stored dry without any liability to decomposition and consequent spontaneous explosion. He accomplishes his objects by covering the particles of gun cotton with sugar, with chlorate and potash, or other salts, so as to separate the particles of cotton, and by varying the proportions and quantities of these materials to suit the special explosive quality required. The experiments, however, were simply to test the quality of the cotton as prepared for rifle shooting as compared with gunpowder. The cartridges contained 50 grains of cotton, and were tried against gunpowder cartridges containing 50 grains, 70 grains, and 84 grains. The first trial was against a target composed of fourteen pine boards, of one inch thick, clamped together, and at 25 yards' distance. In this case the bullets in each instance passed through all the boards, and splashed against the iron target behind; but at longer distances, up to 200 yards, the gun cotton still penetrated, while the gunpowder cartridges, containing 70 grains, and ultimately 84 grains, had to be used to effect the same amount of penetration. At 500 yards the shooting from the shoulder with the gun-cotton cartridges was regular and good.

MERCURIAL VAPOUR.—The effect of mercurial vapour on iodide of silver is well known to those who are acquainted with the experiments and photographic process originated by Daguerre. M. Merget has made some farther interesting researches into the vaporization of mercury. The following processes have arisen out of his experiments:—Trace upon a sheet of paper a drawing of any kind, with a solution of either nitrate of silver or chloride of gold; the drawing or writing thus made will be invisible. If the paper be placed over a vessel containing mercury, sufficient vapour will be generated, even at an ordinary temperature, to communicate to the previously invisible drawing a black tint. One would scarcely have expected that a brilliant and heavy metal like mercury would emit a vapour, yet of the fact here mentioned there cannot be any doubt whatever. It was the accidental presence of a little mercury in a drawer, in which M. Daguerre had stored away one of his experimental photographic plates, that led to the discovery associated with his name; and M. Merget's recent applications of this almost insensible vaporization bid fair to assume great importance. One of these applications is as follows:—Expose a sheet of paper or a piece of wood above mercury. The vapour will insinuate itself within the pores of the paper or wood, and when a sheet of prepared paper is placed against the sheet or the wood, the details of vegetable construction, however delicate they may be, will be seen reproduced upon the paper with scrupulous fidelity; in fact the sensitiveness of the process is such that it will indicate the slightest traces of mercury, either in the bodies of animals or in the atmosphere. In all looking-glass manufactures, no matter how large and well ventilated they may be, it has been proved that from the floor to the ceiling the atmosphere is constantly saturated with mercurial vapour. Workmen who only remained for four hours a day in such a place have their skins, beards, hair, and clothes impregnated with mercury, so that, even outside of the workshop, they remain under the influence of the deleterious emanations from this metal. The hand of a workman in one of these factories, when

placed over a sheet of prepared paper, left a faithful image of it. In connection with this subject it is proper to observe that it has been known for some time that the vapour of sulphur is an antidote for that of mercury.

#### IMPROVEMENT IN THE MANUFACTURE OF SOAP.

MR. WILLIAM JOHNSON has invented and patented certain improvements in the manufacture of soap, the object of which is to produce an economical and easily made soap, suitable for all ordinary washing operations.

In the manufacture he takes four hundred pounds of tallow and two hundred pounds of resin, and boils them with a solution of caustic lye or potash. When sufficiently boiled he allows the mixture to cool down to the temperature of about 85 degs. Fahr. Then he adds five gallons of spirits of turpentine, eight pounds carbonate of potash, and fifty pounds French chalk, or the same quantity of American talc. These substances are then thoroughly mixed or crutched in the boiled mixture. He next sifts into the mass ten pounds powdered sal ammoniac. The mass, still warm, is then well mixed or crutched, so that the various ingredients may be thoroughly diffused and mixed together.

This crutching operation should be carefully performed, and care should be taken that no greater heat be used at this time than 85 degs. Fahr., as the turpentine is very susceptible to evaporation, and some of the other ingredients will degenerate if a higher heat be used, and injure the soap.

The soap thus made is allowed to cool in suitable receptacles, and is then ready for use.

It is announced, apparently on authority, that Sir William Jenner will be created a Civil Knight Commander of the Bath, and that Dr. Gull will be made a baronet, for their excellent services during the illness of the Prince of Wales.

The yield of Irish flax during 1871 has fallen from thirty stones an acre in the previous year to a little under fourteen stones an acre, and the whole produce has decreased from 35,000 tons in 1870 to about 13,500 tons in 1871, a decrease of no less than 22,000 tons, making the yields the smallest ever known in Ireland.

**MAKING WILLS.**—Lord Clyde wrote his will at his club on a sheet of note-paper, in half a dozen lines, and it was duly proved; and there is a story of an ostler who, being at his last gasp, crawled to the corn-chest, raised the lid, scrawled his parting injunctions on the wood with a piece of chalk, got a postboy and stableman to witness his signature, and so died. The box lid was taken off its hinges, and satisfactorily proved in Doctors' Commons.

**HOW MUCH ARSENIC WILL KILL A FLY.**—Orfila, the celebrated doctor, being examined as an "expert," on a capital trial, was asked whether he could tell what quantity of arsenic was requisite to kill a fly. The doctor replied: "Certainly, M. le Président; but I must know beforehand the age of the fly, its temperament, its condition and habits of body, whether married or single, widow or maiden, widower or bachelor. When satisfied on these points I can answer your question."

**IMPORTANT DISCOVERY IN PHOTOGRAPHY.**—Reproductions of designs such as portraits and landscapes have long existed on porcelain and enamel; we have numerous specimens of them on old crockery; but we believe it is the first time photographs have been bodily fixed on such substances by means of violent heat, estimated at 1,200 degrees Centigrade. This process is due to M. Geynet, who not only makes no secret of it, but invites all who take an interest in photography to visit his laboratory, at No. 8, Rue Neuves des Augustins, where he explains the different manipulations requisite for the success of the operation.

**FIRE AT STANDISH HALL.**—This old mansion, in which it is supposed the "Lancashire plot" against William III. was hatched in 1694, has had a narrow escape from destruction by fire. The Standish family have not for many years resided at the hall, which is at present occupied by Mr. A. Ekersley, Mayor of Wigan, who has furnished the house. The fire broke out in the dining-room, and vigorous measures were taken to extinguish it. These were successful, but not before a valuable oil painting had been destroyed, another much damaged, and a third scorched. The floor had been burnt, the walls injured, the roof had suffered slightly, and the mantel-piece was destroyed. It is supposed the fire reached the room from a chimney through a crack, the existence of which was not previously known.

**DEATH OF A CRIMEAN HERO.**—The Irish papers announce the death of Colonel Esmonde, which took place at Bruges on the 14th ult. The deceased gentleman joined the 18th Royal Irish Regiment during the Burmese War, and for the gallantry displayed there he received a decoration. He also served in the same regiment in the Crimea during

the siege of Sebastopol, and was one of the first to enter the Redan, his bravery on that occasion securing for him the well-merited honour of the Victoria Cross. On leaving the army he was appointed Deputy-Inspector General of the Royal Irish Constabulary, a post which he held until he met with an accident in the hunting-field, which obliged him to resign it, and ultimately caused his premature death. The gallant colonel was brother to Sir John Esmonde, Bart., M.P. for the county of Waterford, and nephew of the late Right Hon. Sir Thomas Esmonde, Bart.

**WILD BOARS IN FRANCE.**—A wild-boar hunt took place a few days back in a wood belonging to Baron Lucas, at Longueville (Seine-Inférieure). After an exciting hunt of two hours two of those fierce animals were killed. Within the last few weeks five others have been destroyed in the same locality. An extraordinary hunt has just taken place at Bettoncourt (Haute-Marne). M. Ranelau, of the chateau of Donjeux, was with his dogs and several friends in a wood in the environs, when the pack suddenly came upon a herd of a dozen wild boars. The pack pursued them to the village, where four of the fugitives took refuge in a barn, of which the doors were at once closed, and they were speedily killed with pitchforks. Three others met with a similar fate in a stable, and an eighth burst in the door of a cottage in which a weaver was at work, and then dashed through a window on the opposite side of the room, but was shot outside by a farmer. The four others escaped.

**GUN COTTON COMMITTEE REPORT.**—The gun-cotton committee have furnished a preliminary or progress report, the general character of which is so decidedly favourable that the Government will now have no hesitation about completing the gun-cotton factory at Waltham Abbey. The evidence which the committee have obtained goes to establish the perfect safety of the manufacturing operations of gun cotton—those operations being all conducted while the material is in a damp and therefore inoperative condition. No danger can possibly arise until the material is dried; and the operation of drying will be carried on elsewhere, and away from houses, &c. So also all stores of dry gun cotton will be established at a distance from populous neighbourhoods. Some important experiments will shortly take place in the neighbourhood of Hastings with gun cotton, to determine the facility and safety with which it can be dried, and to test its explosive and other properties. One or two martello towers will be brought into requisition for the occasion.

**RAILWAYS IN ASIA MINOR.**—The Turkish Minister of Public Works publishes the following official note on the subject of this enterprise: "The railway in course of construction between Scutari and Iamid is one of the numerous public benefits which do honour to the initiative spirit of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan. His Majesty, gratified with the progress made with this line, and acting upon the regenerating ideas with which he is ever animated, has further ordered the Minister of Public Works, through the Grand Vizier, to establish a network of railways throughout the whole of Asia Minor, by means of branches, communicating with the Scutari and Iamid line. In conformity with the Sultan's order, engineers have been sent to Iamid to examine Mount Segurd, and to make all necessary surveys, with a view to the extension of the line to Eski-Sheir, as a first instalment of His Majesty's splendid scheme. As the works on the Scutari to Iamid line are comparatively far advanced, considering the time employed upon them, there is reason to believe that this section will be completed by next September, that the extension to Eski-Sheir will be in readiness during the following spring, and that both lines can then be joined. The important subject of the branch line is now under earnest consideration at the Ministry of Public Works."

**THE STATE VISIT TO ST. PAUL'S.**—No date has yet been fixed for the State visit to St. Paul's, but the 28th of February is the most likely day, and two o'clock about the time for the arrival of the Royal cortege. The Queen will be in full state, and will be attended by all the officers of the Court. The arrangements, following the precedent of the Thanksgiving in the time of George III., will be in the hands of the Lord Chamberlain, while the Chief Commissioner of Works will have the ordering of the fitting up of the Cathedral for about 20,000 ticket-holders. Mr. John Goss will superintend the music, which is expected to be of a very imposing character, and will be supported by an unusually large body of chorus singers. He will compose the music for the *Te Deum*. It has been stated that the new organ will be ready for the occasion. The work of the interior will be entrusted to Messrs. Cubitt and Messrs. Willis. The flooring is to be raised one foot throughout the Cathedral. The report has been circulated that the Royal cortege would proceed by the Embankment, but this is scarcely likely; and in view of the ordinary route being taken—namely,

through Fleet Street and Ludgate Hill—the householders have formed committees to arrange for appropriate and handsome decorations. The Prince of Wales will not, as reported, be present at the Cathedral, for if possible he will have left England for the south of France by that time. The Royal yacht, the "Victoria and Albert," has been ordered to be in readiness, and, according to French authority, the "Louis XIV." and "L'Utile" have been ordered by the French Government to escort the yacht, an act of courtesy of the most cordial character. The Prince is gaining health and strength rapidly, and has been out walking two or three times.

## THE GIPSY'S ORDEAL.

### CHAPTER XI.

FOR two or three weeks Carlos and Victor subsisted upon the fish which he caught and gathered, varied with the hard, dry, black bread he had rescued. But the latter was disappearing rapidly. In his wanderings in the interior he had met with some wild grapes, and around the southerly shore of the island he found a species of low shrub, growing in great profusion, which bore a large kind of beach-plum, that proved very palatable, and of these he ate heartily. He gathered a great many, which he dried in the hot sun, and they afterwards served to eke out his scanty meals.

About fifty yards inland from the shore he discovered among the rocks a sort of natural cave, which he adopted for his resting-place.

Here he frequently sat, in the heat of day, or lounged—with the ever-present Victor beside him—musing upon his strange fortune, and mentally querying how long this phase in his young experience was to last!

He was in his sixteenth year only. He had had a somewhat varied experience, and had become inured to "hard knocks;" but he was now in a worse dilemma than he had ever found himself.

He lay often, during the first three or four weeks of his existence on the island, thinking of the beautiful, dark-eyed woman who in his earlier days visited him, known to him only as the Donna Una; of Fin-ja, his tutor, but never his friend; of Pietro, the gipsy chief, whom he never could comprehend at all; of Inez; of the "Lancet" now buried beneath the dark blue waves of the Mediterranean; of her captain and crew, now all gone.

Carlos had not yet attempted any extensive exploration of the island. He had not been upon the northerly side at all, and had seen the extreme easterly end of it only in the distance. He had been occupied in getting his fishing-gear in condition for use, as fish was his chief dependence, both for himself and Victor, who was a very good eater, and had been gathering fruit, so he had been kept very busy.

He had several times taken a look from the high hills up and down and around him when the atmosphere was clear; and he could plainly discern, at the upper extremity of the island, three or four miles away, that it was higher there in spots, and more rocky; where, in places, lofty rugged boulders rose, around which the sea tumbled heavily, and a constant line of rough breakers rolled around the easterly point at all times.

In bad weather, or during the high winds which occasionally barred over the island, this particular locality was a scene of terrific commotion.

Carlos had seen the great foamy waves dash up over the rugged shore, and one day after breakfast he took Victor, out a stout cedar staff, and concluded to explore this part of the island.

As he approached this spot he found that the distance was much greater than he had supposed, and the lay of the land between the two extremes of the island was entirely different from what he had imagined it to be, for, as he went on, he observed very considerable spaces of rising ground, and passed through numerous small valleys and gulches. He saw patches of stunted woods, and passed long ranges of lesser rocks, while the whole space was covered with grass and low bushes that rendered the island quite picturesque and diversified. He judged it to be fully five miles from his starting-place to this upper island point, for he was two hours, he thought, in reaching it.

As he neared the extreme end, which at last jutted out sharply into the sea, he saw that it was a long reef of forbidding angular black rocks, over which the waves constantly beat, and fiercely too, for round this point there seemed to set a very sharp current, tending thence south-westward.

He kept on, however, and clambered up and down over the ledges, and finally stood where he could get a good view of the open sea beyond.

It was a grand sight. Far as the eye could reach, in every direction, there was one broad expanse of now quiet deep blue waters, swelling and rolling



only without a show of white-cap or sail anywhere except at his feet and round this one riotous rocky point of the island.

But, as he looked, his gaze was suddenly riveted upon what he had thus far mistaken, in the distance, for one of the ragged boulders of rock that thrust their bulky heads up from the sea—of which there were half a hundred, at the least, large and small—but he now made it out to be the after-portion of the hull of a vessel.

What was it? he thought, quickly, as he pushed away towards this object. Was it the "Lancet" that had been washed there by the storm and current after she foundered? It must be, he thought, as he hurried along.

The old hull he saw was certainly very like the brigantine, as he remembered her sides and stern; and he hastened out as well as he could over the jagged and seaweed-covered rocks until he reached to within a few yards of the great black wreck, when he found it was not the "Lancet's" remains at all, but a somewhat larger and heavier-built craft—less shapely than the brigantine, and much more ancient in model.

Upon still closer inspection the boy found that there was but a portion of the vessel left, about the fore-chains apparently; and, to all appearance, this wreck must have been lying there for a long time, probably for years, for the hull was fast locked and settled in between two pointed rocks, where it had evidently been thrown originally, and it had since gone considerably to decay or ruin from breakage.

This wreck lay stern on towards the shore, and it was mostly out of the water, high up between the two boulders; and at any long distance, on account of its dark colour, shape, and the now almost complete covering of sea-weeds and barnacles, which adhered to its sides all round at the water's edge, it appeared like one of the rocks themselves, until the deception was dispelled by a close approach to the spot where it had lain so long.

The sea oftentimes washed over it, for traces of the salt spray could be seen along the shattered bulwarks and high stern deck. No name could be distinguished anywhere about her, and all was conjecture in the mind of Carlos as to what she had been. Clearly the wreck had been there for years.

The boy was exceedingly anxious to examine this wreck, if possible; but the hull lay so high up, and the water was so deep and rough—where it lay lowest—that he could not get aboard conveniently.

He had come a long distance from the cave, and had brought to lunch with him, or provisions for the morrow, or he would have remained there and gone on board the next morning. He lingered about, notwithstanding, until the tide receded, as he had observed it did twice in every twenty-four hours at the other end of the island, so that at low ebb he could see more of the hull. She had been a very large vessel—a brig, or brigantine, of good size, and possibly a piratical craft. There might be valuables on board her!

But of what avail could such valuables as he then thought of be to him upon that deserted shore? Still he would like to see what was in that hold and cabin, and secret lockers—if he could get there.

He passed all round the wreck, except directly in front, and saw what he needed to enable him to get on the deck, which he could not reach without a ladder. The irons to which the dead-eyes were attached—upon the starboard side—and to which the shroud lanyards had been connected, were still in a good state of preservation, and projected out from the side like huge meat-hooks. Carlos thought he could knot the large rope he had in the boat at the cave, sling one end over these irons, then clamber up and over the side. And he proceeded at once to put this plan into execution. Turning back, he arrived at the cave before sunset, where he and Victor got a dry supper, and early next morning he made his knotted rope and sling, with which he proposed to board the wreck.

Taking a good supply of bread and cold fish, with his pockets filled with dried plums, Carlos started off with the dog Victor, who very cheerfully carried other provisions in a canvas bag Carlos had made and hung about his great, stout neck, and made for "Rocky Point," as he named it.

After some delay and several unsuccessful attempts with his sling he finally caught it upon one of the old chain-bolts, and he then drew up his knotted rope and secured it by a slip knot he had previously prepared. Then he quickly mounted and sat upon the weather-beaten taffrail, looking at the sloping deck before him.

The sea spray had plainly passed up and over the stern, though it was high out of the water and perfectly dry now. But during very high winds the waves probably broke over the whole wreck, so the boy judged from the action of the water, then in a still time.

He stepped upon the deck. It was firm, though decaying, and in places it was sea-worm eaten. The inclination of the hull, from the shattered front—forward of the waist—to the stern-rail was considerable, so that the deck aft was high and dry.

Carlos went upon the quarter-deck, looked down over the stern, and saw that the rudder had gone entirely. The side bulwarks were also stove and gone. One end of the rail was intact yet. The masts were all out of her, broken clean down, and the debris of the tarred, broken, heavy rigging had gone to decay utterly.

He looked down through the dead-lights, which were still unbroken, into the cabin. All was densely dark there. He went all over the old ruined hull on deck, then he tried to get below.

Victor remained among the rocks outside, whining and striving to get on board, but this was impossible.

Carlos found the narrow hatches over the cabin companion-way locked, and the bolts had long since rusted fast; he could not stir them. He went down again over the side, spoke to Victor pleasantly, got a stone, and again climbed the rope and went aboard. With this rock he battered away at the cabin hatch-bolts until he parted them. But he was obliged at last to smash in the door with the stone before he could get down below.

The cabin steps were firm, and he reached the floor to ascertain that the cabin itself was in a very good state of preservation. The air 'twas very musty, and the partitions, doors, and berths, which were all of hard wood plank, were dark and much discoloured by age and mouldy rust.

But it was so dark he could see but little. He returned to the deck for fresh air, he did not fancy the atmosphere below. He had never in his life before experienced the sensations he felt there.

He went up, stood over the rail, chirruped to Victor, got the fresh air, then went down into the cabin once more, feeling better.

Carlos could not determine what the trouble was with him. At first he experienced a slight nausea at the stomach, but he supposed it must be on account of the long-continued closeness in which the place had been kept, and he presumed that ventilation would quickly bring things all right again.

On going down a second time, however, he realized a similar feeling of nausea, though he now could see around the dingy cabin more distinctly.

As he turned back, near the foot of the companion-way, in a rack, he saw two axes. He quickly brought them to the deck, where, after refreshing his lungs with the purer air outside, he proceeded to cut away the planks that formed the roof of the cabin.

He very soon accomplished this work, and though the axe was rusty it had a good edge still; and he soon had an opening two feet square from the deck into the cabin, which afforded ample light and air for his future purposes.

But it was now getting dark. The day had gone before he was aware of it. He could do nothing more just now; so he left farther explorations to the following morning.

He lay down upon the ground near by, after making a good supper, and with Victor as guard he slept soundly till daybreak, for he was fatigued with his labours and journey of the previous twelve hours.

Next day he took an early meal, fed Victor, as was his custom, and, mounting the side of the hull by means of his knotted rope, he proceeded to explore the cabin of the old vessel.

#### CHAPTER XII:

THE cabin of the wreck was a narrow one, with a limited space on either side for bunk-rooms. There were three of these, whose doors were closed.

A small oaken table, a stool or two, a box containing a rusty quadrant, and a dozen stained cutlasses hanging at the rear wall were all that was in sight.

The hole which Carlos had cut in the deck overhead admitted ample light; and during the night since this operation had been performed the musty atmosphere had been perceptibly purified; but still there were traces of the unearthly odour around which had so sensibly sickened the boy when he first burst the premises open.

He took down two or three of the heavy weapons, which he removed to the deck; also one of the stools.

The swords were of excellent material, but were rusted and discoloured. The table was fastened to the floor. He then opened and examined the bunk-rooms, one by one.

In the first one, which had evidently been the captain's apartment, he found some mouldy and decayed bedding, a few articles of old clothing, in similar condition, a good spy-glass, and another triangular box, containing a quadrant, in a good state of preservation.

A small box-compass hung at the side of the low berth also which was uninjured. These were all removed to the deck, and whatever was of any use was secured by Carlos for the future. He took up the other axe also, which was a good one, a small iron kettle, and a saw.

The next room he opened was plainly the first officer's, for in addition to some more decayed clothing, a hammer, and file, he found there a sort of log-book, much soiled, and very mouldy, from the last pages of which he gathered indistinctly the following brief records:

"In lat. 29 deg. long. 101 deg. W.; took gale; north, wore up, heavy weath.; five days—lost mast—sails—and by the board, at 2 a.m. Capta—ill, one passenger; Tortosa to Constan—pla. Out away wreck; scudded thirteen hours; sprung leak—all hands pump two days. Sinking. Ordered boats—ready. Increased gale. Brig goin—down."

This was written in Spanish, blotted and blurred, and evidently left in haste, unfinished, at the last moment when the vessel was sinking and the crew were fleeing to the boats.

There were no names of officers, the "passenger" alluded to, or of the vessel. Even this record was picked out by Carlos word by word, after study—for the handwriting was wretched, and the confusion must have been fearful when it was penned.

This then was the beginning of the end of this craft. The boy saw that she must have encountered a terrible storm, like that which the "Lancet" had recently passed through before she foundered; and this vessel had been dismasted in a similar gale, in somewhere near the same latitude, where the brigantine had sprung a leak.

Subsequently she had been deserted by the officers and crew, and had afterwards been cast ashore upon this rocky point, minus her rudder, stern foremost,—where she had lain three or four years, at the least—and her forward portion had either been broken up upon these rocks, and scattered, or it had been dashed in when she first struck, and the stern had been thrown round and washed upon the ledge, where the bulk of the hull now lay, wedged in between the two boulders.

They had been beaten about for six or seven days, according to the record, with the captain ill or passenger, he couldn't understand which; and, after this, the vessel might have been as many days more afloat before she struck the reef and went to pieces.

This was all he could learn thus far. He was destined to be farther enlightened shortly in a way and to an extent that he little anticipated, as he tossed this logbook up the companion-way, among the other things he had determined to remove, and turned to the third door, to take a look into the last bunk-room he examined on board that craft.

The door of this room was fastened evidently on the inside. It was quite at the rear of the cabin-facings the foot of the companion-way, and isolated from the other two little apartments.

The boy could not get it open, and he was obliged to cut through it.

He thought it a little strange that this door should be thus secured; but the thought, also, suddenly occurred to him that it might contain the private lockers of the captain, in which he kept his money and valuables! This was not an uncommon practice, as he knew. He hoped it would prove so. Perhaps, after all, the "fortune" he sought was before him already—locked up in that secret room. The captain's private chest-room, probably. He quickly took an axe, to satisfy himself if it were filled with gold and silver—though he hadn't yet concluded of what mortal use it could be to him if he found it, in that place—or how he would ever get away with it, or with him—if even!

The opening he had already made in the deck overhead was just above and forward of this mysteriously fastened door; and the light came clearly down directly upon this door, and would go into the bunk-room when the door was cut away.

The doors opened outward from the bunks into the cabin. Carlos cut off the two hinges quickly, then, with two stout blows, the fastening gave way, and the door fell outward, flat on the cabin floor, at the boy's feet, who looked into that supposed treasury of the captain, beneath the flood of light which poured straight down from the opening in the deck, upon a scene which sent him staggering backwards against the side of the cabin, while his hair fairly stuck out on his head with the sudden fright this ghastly object caused him for an instant!

But, though the boy was shocked, he was too stout of heart and limb to entertain alarm for but a brief period; and, especially, since it was only the form of a dead man he saw there!

He stared at it for a moment only, then went out upon the deck.

Now he understood what the offensive odour meant which had accosted his senses when he first

burst the cabin open. But he quickly recovered his temporarily disturbed thoughts, and reflected that there was but one man there, and that a dead one; he was not afraid to encounter any one live man, certainly; and, since he did not kill this one, he wouldn't fear him.

Still a corpse isn't a pleasant thing to encounter under such circumstances; and even brave, plucky, stalwart Carlos preferred living company at that moment; and he concluded to leave the old wreck for a time and sport with Victor on shore, and recover his equanimity, for he confessed to himself that he was frightened then as he never was before.

He went to the rail and looked for Victor, whom he had left on the rocks below awaiting him, but the dog wasn't there. He called him, looked about after him, up and down, whistled, shouted, but no Victor was within sight or sound of the boy's voice—that was certain.

This was very singular. What had become of him? Carlos dropped down by the rope to the ledge, ran back to the shore, looked seaward, called again and again, but no Victor showed himself.

The boy was frightened now, and seriously. This was a calamity, indeed! He wouldn't voluntarily have parted with Victor—the brave beast—the gift and life-time companion of Inez—his trusty friend, and the sharer of his recent dangers and troubles—for all the gold that might have been on board that old hulk.

He went to the reef where the rough sea was rolling and heaving, and rioting with the current and in the deep eddies around the forward part of the wreck, near which he had last seen Victor looking anxiously up at him on board, evidently desirous to be there with him, and he thought could the dog have been so silly as to attempt to jump up there? and had he fallen into that surf below, and been whirled away in this sweeping current and drowned?

No. He couldn't be drowned easily. He had gone through the late storm, chained to his kennel, for miles, and he wouldn't drown. He must be about somewhere, of course. Carlos didn't want to think for a moment that he had lost Victor. That would have been a fearful calamity! He went up on the shore. It was past noon. He whistled—called him "Victor, boy! Victor—ho, Victor!"

But he didn't come.

Carlos was hungry. He had actually forgotten for the time all about the dead man, or ghost, or whatever it was he had seen in the bunk on board the wreck. He wanted to see the living face of the favourite brute he so loved, who was, indeed, his only companion now in that solitude.

The boy sat down in moody silence to partake of his first meal alone since he had been on the island. And a lonely undertaking it was, to be sure, in the absence of the sole sharer of his perils—his good friend Victor.

But he was hungry and had a good appetite. Before going on board the wreck he had disengaged from around Victor's neck the rough canvas bag he had made for the purpose, and the dog was thus free from any encumbrance.

"If he had tumbled overboard he would swim ashore," thought Carlos, at last. "He can't be drowned easily," he insisted. "There he is!" shouted the boy, springing up the next moment and dropping his dinner upon the ground. "That's he, certain!"

He listened, for he heard Victor's voice, immediately in the distance.

The sound did not come from the water either, it was not his clear, ringing bark, but it was away inland, and from towards the shore opposite to that where Carlos had hitherto been lodging or perambulating. He had never been over on that side of the island yet, but he knew the sound.

Seizing his stout staff, he left his food on the ground and hurried away over the little hills that intervened between him and the noise of the dog's voice, which was a kind of muffled cry, as if he were in trouble, and very soon came up with him. He whistled and called as he ran to encourage the poor brute if he were in peril, precisely as if he had been human and could understand every word he said, as Victor could ordinarily, for he possessed more intelligence in his way than a great many human beings whom Carlos knew.

"Hi, Victor! brave fellow! hold on to him! Hi, boy!" shouted Carlos, hastening forward to the reason, and bound to sell his own life before Victor should lose his at the hands or fangs of his antagonist, whether it were man or beast.

Victor soon bore in sight in one of the hollows, where the boy found the dog hanging to the neck of an animal about two-thirds his own size, which was tugging and struggling to get free from his grip, while the dog did not seem inclined to harm it, for he was barking and shouting, evidently only to summon his master to his aid.

Close by the dog and his prize there were two more diminutive specimens of the same species of animal,

skipping wildly about, running into and out of the immediately surrounding low brushwood, and evidently either enjoying the apparent fun going on or very much frightened at the encounter between Victor and the larger animal.

Carlos was quickly upon the spot, and found to his joy and surprise that Victor was not only not harmed or in jeopardy but that he was doing a very good turn on shore for his master while the boy had been so busily engaged on board the old hulk.

The dog had discovered or scented this animal, chased it down, and seized it by the long hair and skin of its throat, and held on until Carlos had come up, barking faintly the while, as well as he could with his mouth filled with the flowing hair.

It proved to be a fine large she-goat, of the chamopsis species, common in Southern Europe, and the two small ones were her kids, about four weeks old.

Carlos chanced to have in his pocket some strands of the marine he had taken with him to the wreck to arrange his sling with, but he had not used them; and it required but a moment of thought or time for him to seize the hind legs of the mother and bind them, and with another strand to secure her fore legs together and throw her upon the ground easily, when Victor as quickly released his hold upon the frightened but unharmed victim.

"Good fellow! good dog!" exclaimed the boy, kindly, and patting his head affectionately, while tears of joy actually burst from his eyes upon realizing that his valued friend was safe, and had only been foraging a little upon his own account.

But what a prize it had now secured, to be sure! Better than a score of dead men such as Carlos had just discovered in the vessel's cabin, after so much toil and anxiety—at least, so thought his master.

Now they could both have some nice fresh-roasted meat for dinner. He could catch the kids easily enough, and he would slaughter them, and skin them, one at a time, and they would furnish him and Victor with excellent dinners for two weeks.

Then he could secure the mother, and have goat's milk with his water every day, and he could kill her when necessary, and have more fresh meat, and all this would be very nice.

No—on reflection, he wouldn't do this at all. At least not yet. He would get the mother down to the shore, and tether her safely.

He had plenty of small, strong rope, and he would tie her up in some place near where he would remain, for the present, until he got through with his search of the vessel—for he hadn't yet given that expedition over by any means, although he had been scared not a little—and he could not go back and forth from the cave every day; the distance was too great, and the road far too rough.

So he determined finally and wisely to take the great she-goat or chamopsis to the open space near the end of the island, and fasten her well at the edge of the low woods that were there, and the kids would soon find her to suckle her, he thought.

At the proper time he would catch the young ones, and, meantime, his little family would grow up round him, and he thought he might domesticate them all, which would be very pleasant, especially if it were his fate to remain long—or possibly permanently—upon the island, which he now declared wasn't so very desolate after all.

But how to get the mother over to the shore was now the question. Fortunately he found that Victor had not hurt her at all. The flesh was broken a little under her throat, but her breast hair was so long and so thick that the dog had got his mouth filled with that principally, and he had been brought up in the mountains where he was born, and was kept for the first two years of his life—so Inez had informed Carlos—and had seen hundreds of these or similar animals at home, and probably had been educated not to harm them.

The sun was declining. Carlos and Victor both had gone thus far without dinner.

The boy examined his prize, found her safely secured, and left her lying easily on her side—while, calling the dog, he returned to get his dinner and the stout rope he left near the vessel.

Having eaten his cold fish and bread, he fed Victor heartily, and, taking the rope, he returned to the spot where he left the she-goat.

His prize was gone.

He could find nothing of mother or kids.

One of the marine ropes was sundered, and he found it upon the ground, near where he had left his prize, but the animal had gone with the other.

It was too late in the day to hunt for goats. The sun was fast going down, and he had four miles good to travel—to reach the cave—where he desired to get a sound night's rest, which he needed, and also to procure food for another day or two, and some other trifles which he required.

He was disappointed, for he had indulged in great expectations regarding that she-goat and her milk

and the two kids, and the "happy family." He had intended to bring up so cosily round him.

For one moment the idea came into his head, and he gave utterance to it:

"I might have cut the beast's throat and had some mutton at any rate. Victor did his part, and was entitled to a good shin bone or two to crunch."

But Carlos had a kind disposition naturally, and he concluded the sentences:

"And if I had done this foolish thing the two poor little kids must have perished. No. Let 'em run. There's room enough on this island for them and us, Victor, yet."

Calling the dog, he trudged away towards the cave, whistling cheerily as he marched, and reached his humble lodging-place, tired out, before the darkness became so great that he could not have easily found it had he been longer delayed.

Victor lay down as usual at the mouth of the cave, and the weary boy soon forgot the living and the dead. He slept soundly till daylight.

#### CHAPTER XIII.

Up at dawn, refreshed and recovered from his yesterday's excitement, Carlos got his breakfast, loaded himself and Victor again, as usual, with two days' bread and dry plums, and the balance of his last cooked fish, and away they started once more for "Rocky Point," where the old wreck lay.

The lad took a dish of water with his dry, hard bread, then secured the balance of the small rope-coil from the boat which he had not yet used. There were ten fathoms of it at the least, and it was small, but strong and good.

They reached the point just after sunrise, where Carlos relieved Victor of his burden. He stowed the food away in a shady ledge of the rocks, and, taking his rope, started forth to look for the she-goat and kids. He felt satisfied that she could not have got far away if she had not succeeded in breaking the strings from her forelegs, and as he had found only one of the ropes the night before he fancied that he and Victor together might soon overtake her.

They went to the place where she had first been captured, and upon a knoll, fifty rods distant, the boy suddenly saw one of the kids—or one very like it. He whistled the dog; they went forward into the bush, and soon heard a crashing, and jumping, and struggling there, which Carlos quickly discovered the cause of.

It was the she-goat, as he conjectured. Her forelegs were still tied together, and she was striving to get off with all her might, but couldn't make very rapid headway.

The kids sprang into the bushes and disappeared. Carlos called Victor to keep him from molesting the young ones, and the boy very quickly got hold of the mother in his stout arms, where he held her firmly, for he was a good deal the stronger of the two.

Finally he secured her, though she struggled and jumped like a trout at the end of a fishing-line. The boy held on, pulled her forward, spite of her opposition, put Victor behind her, and she quickly came to understand what was wanted of her, for before they got down to the shore she was being led by the end of the rope quite peaceably.

Carlos chose a shady place close to the edge of the woods, where he tied his end of the long rope and left the animal to herself within reach of a nice green spot of herbage and grass, upon which she soon lay down when she found that she couldn't get away.

Within an hour afterward, while Carlos was again on board the wreck, and Victor was lying near by waiting for his master's return, the boy heard the bleating of the two kids, and the answer of the mother, when the at first frightened little ones came down to the old one's side, and remained by her until Carlos and the dog approached them in the afternoon.

The she-goat had evidently been brought to that island on ship-board. The animal, he believed it not unlikely, had come there upon the very brig that was wrecked on the Point—probably while young—and, when the vessel came ashore, she had been washed off, and was the mother of the older goats on the island, of which several were subsequently seen there by Carlos.

It was, and still is, a common thing for vessels to carry one or two of these goats on board in the Mediterranean for their milk—especially on passenger vessels.

It was several days before Carlos could get near the old goat, and she was desperately afraid of Victor. But the lad finally got her down safely to the neighbourhood of the cave, where the food was not so plentiful, but quite sufficient, and the little ones followed her and remained by her until they were subsequently all domesticated, as we shall hereafter see.

When Carlos had secured the goat near the Point, the day he captured her, he went up the side of the old hull again, and once more descended into the cabin to finish his researches there, and to find out



if possible something farther about the loss of the vessel, and who the dead man was.

Carlos was a very good boy at heart, though he had passed through a very rough life; he had never done any act in his life that could cause him to fear the living, so he philosophically concluded that he had no reason to fear the dead.

It was a very unpleasant thing to him to look upon a corpse, and especially there in that isolated place; but he no longer felt any compunctions about it, for he was truly a brave boy, and was seeking for information now.

So he went about his farther search in a business-like way—resolved to satisfy himself if he could who the dead man was, and to learn how the vessel came to be in that place, stove up upon that ledge.

He, nevertheless, approached the disagreeable scene with reverential caution, for the dead are entitled to—and always command respect among all civilized beings.

But he soon found that the remains he had so curiously discovered were merely a skeleton, though covered with black clothing to the chin.

He drew aside the mouldy bed covering, which was decayed, and found the form of a man there, not so tall as himself, but with a full stock of hair upon the dry skin of the bleached skull. The hair was bound up in a loose roll behind the head, but the whole of the skeleton otherwise was enveloped in the black dress from throat to feet.

He now examined the features of this dress more critically, as well as its shape; and he suddenly came to the conclusion that the corpse was not that of a man, but a woman.

This impression perplexed him greatly. But on reflection he concluded that this person must have been the "one passenger" hinted at in the brief account he remembered in the log-book he found in the first officer's bunk-room, which was the correct solution as it turned out.

Here was more mystery. A woman? Who was she? Where from? Where bound? A young woman, too, evidently—for her teeth were perfect and white as ivory.

Carlos searched about for some clue to this strange discovery.

At length his eye fell upon the bony hand of the corpse, upon the finger of which sparkled two magnificent diamond rings—the stones of which gleamed like huge dew drops in the light which came down through the opening of the deck just over his head.

He quickly removed them, and found they contained no initials or marks that gave him any information, except upon one, on the inside of which was cut the word "Montreal." He put them in his pocket, for, surely, thought he, they are of no further use here.

Then he examined farther, and discovered a small, square pearl-cased set of tablets, which lay beneath the other skeleton hand, which he took and opened. It contained several leaves of parchment—and these leaves were filled with writing, in a lady's hand, also in good Spanish—his native language—which he instantly read, to his amazement, as follows:

"I am dying with fever and through long exposure. I was bound in this doomed vessel from Tortosa, on the coast of Spain, my native land, to Smyrna and Constantinople—in search of my lost child. I was informed—as I now believe maliciously and wrongfully—by a base man who imposed upon me, for his own gain, that my lost one had gone to the East, and that I should meet him there with the child, if I proceeded thither."

"My wicked informant had been for some years our tutor, under liberal pay—but for his own reasons—never explained to me—he stole my child, and secreted it from me. This man was formerly a priest, and resided near Toledo—where the infant was kept, and instructed by him, for several years, before he turned traitor, and robbed me of my baby—whom I now sought in the East at his infamous suggestion. This priest married me secretly to this child's father, and, possessing the secret of my having clandestinely married one far beneath me in social rank—he availed himself of his power over me to defraud, persecute, and impose upon me! Heaven forgive him, as I do, in this dying hour!"

"The vessel is fast going to pieces. Oh, Heaven! I shall never see the face of my child again, whom I so dearly love! I have been ill four long weeks from this dreadful fever. I am helpless and can hardly scrawl these lines. I cannot leave my berth. The storm has ceased, but there is no soul left on board to save me. Four days have passed since I heard a sound except that of the rush of passing waters. I am unable to get up. I am starving—dying with thirst. My money and jewels are beneath my pillow for my child if living."

"The crew have abandoned the sinking vessel. I am lost! I have shrieked for aid vainly, with all my

wasted strength, for hours past. Thus I know I am alone. I was too feeble to be taken with them amid the awful storm, and they have gone with the boats and left me to die. Heaven have mercy upon me, and protect my darling, wherever it may be—the child who never knew its parents!"

"I have written this in the past three days, at times. I must finish, for my senses are falling me. The vessel may be found, or the wreck of her, hereafter. This will inform whoever may find it, if it ever be found, that I am the only daughter of Don Sebastian Perillo, that I married the gipsy, Pietro Ilphonso, without my father's knowledge or suspicion, that I was the mother of the child I was seeking when thus overtaken by fate, that the name of the wretch who stole my son is an Italian, one Claude Napoli, who falsely called himself Padre Fineja. Can—no more. I faint—sink—forgive—UNA."

This was all. The tablets were closed, and the writer evidently expired soon after this last irregularly written page was finished, probably before the vessel struck the reef.

The account was rather ambiguous and mixed, but the reading of this terrible record opened up an entirely new train of thought in the boy's mind.

He had never had an intimation who he was, whence he came, or whom he belonged to. He knew Fineja of course, and remembered him as his tutor, whom he always despised though he had been so long under his charge.

He knew one Napoli; that is, he had seen him once, he remembered; but this was the pirate Napoli. Of course this couldn't be the self-styled "Fineja" who had married this woman to Pietro, because he personally knew Fineja, and he certainly was not the pirate whose car he had cut off on board the "Lancet" in that well-remembered sea-fight; but the name was similar.

He did not remember the name of Pietro Ilphonso at all, or that of the Don Sebastian Perillo. He did recollect a gipsy faintly and a beautiful woman who used to come and see him when a child, whom they called Donna Una. But he knew her by no other name. Was her name Montreal?

Now who were all these people? Who was the woman who signed herself to this declaration "Una"? Who was this self-named "Fineja"? And who was he—himself? Not this child that this dead woman was searching for—oh? He wasn't the son of this unlucky secret marriage, was he? Pietro Ilphonso, the gipsy, was not his father? Was he now gazing on the skeleton of his own mother?

It was all horrible to him. He couldn't comprehend it. He did not realize it. He was too young to feel the real force of all this mystery—wickedness, sorrow, distress, and death combined—but he left the cabin, taking with him the tablets and the two diamond rings—dropped down the rope, and, calling Victor, went up beneath the shadow of the trees to study out all this marvellous intelligence at his leisure, with a view to some satisfactory solution of it, if possible.

What strange dispensation of fate or fortune was it that brought him to this deserted, lone island in the sea to meet with this curious and startling chain of suggestions? Who or what was this Montreal?

There were some points in this dying declaration that he faintly recognized as possibly being connected with his own history. But he could think of no one circumstance that pointed directly to the suspicious that had been started in his mind upon first reading the manuscript of the tablet.

The more he examined the writing the more he was perplexed.

The Lady Una did not mention the child's name or sex anywhere, that he could find, and this omission puzzled him. Was it a boy or a girl that was missing? He could not answer this last question because the writing did not mention the child's name.

This was unfortunate. The other circumstances too were inexplicable.

How could Fineja be the priest who married the woman to the gipsy as she describes? How was this same so-called Fineja the Italian Napoli? Still the boy read it again and again. He was deeply interested in it all, and he finally made another visit to the old cabin to search for farther evidences in support of his suspicions.

Yet he was at a loss to decide in his perplexed mind how the facts related to him directly. There certainly were some points in striking resemblance to what he indirectly knew of his own early history and what was set down in those tablets; but the absence of any mention of the missing child's name or even sex puzzled him most.

This might have been accidental, but it was certainly a queer omission, to say the least of it.

He sought "beneath the pillow," as indicated, for the money and jewels, and found a heavy belt, which had evidently been, at some time, worn upon the person, probably of the dead lady.

He took it out, opened it, and was astounded more than ever upon viewing its startling contents.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

We must now ask the reader to return with us briefly to Spain, while we leave the boy to examine, at his leisure, the contents of the old wreck, and while some explanations and connecting incidents are offered, bearing upon the careers of the characters first introduced in this history, namely, the gipsy, Fineja, Una, and Don Sebastian Perillo, the lady's wealthy and haughty old father.

It will be remembered that some four years prior to the time when Carlos was cast away, and when he was near twelve years old, that he became disgusted with his tutor Fineja, and ran away.

Fineja could not find the boy, and gave him up for the time being. But, with the intention of extorting more money from Una, for he did not dare to apply to Pietro the gipsy, who had thrown him into the great castle well and thought him dead, of course, he again wrote to the injured lady, anonymously, and informed her that "the boy Carlos" had been sent to Constantinople to study Eastern manners and history—and that if she would take passage thither she could find him and confer with or look after him personally away from the interference of the gipsy father, Pietro, who would ruin him if he remained in Spain. For this reason the child had been sent off. He had but little money, and would soon need funds, and she could find him and then and there provide for his future, for he was growing up to be a fine, promising lad.

Now this Fineja very well knew that Una's whole life was wrapped up in this secretly born boy, and he also knew that her father was proud of his name, that the old Don would have murdered the girl had he been made aware of the fact of her union—legal or illegal—with a strolling gipsy. He contrived to keep before the mother's eyes the fact that her death, or her being cast off, even by the Don, for her indiscretion, would be the boy's certain destruction. Thus this so-called "Fineja" secretly kept the young mother constantly on tenter-hooks regarding her child's safety.

When she learned that Carlos had gone to the East instead of sending more money to her anonymous correspondent, who she believed was Fineja, she immediately made up her mind to leave for Constantinople, with funds and jewels, of which she had an abundance, and look after her boy, herself, in a country where she could do so unknown and unmolested by any one.

She had no ties to keep her at home; she came and went as she pleased; and she could return in six months, or a year—or never, as circumstances might determine; but the boy she would find. Thus, as it will be recollected, she suddenly departed from her father's house, no one knew whither, taking her splendid jewels, and with an ample supply of ready gold, she sailed from Tortosa secretly for Smyrna and Constantinople, in search of her son.

The Donna Una had long since learned from Pietro the gipsy that Fineja's real name was Napoli, and that he was an Italian. She always thought him a genuine priest, however, and believed that her secret marriage by that villain to the gipsy—disguised—was legal, though informal. She knew, too, that the Italian was an able man, and as he possessed her secret, and Pietro had selected him for the child's tutor, she was content, for the time being, and paid the bills out of the allowances her rich father lavished on her.

When the boy came to be nine or ten years old she held back, for Fineja had suddenly disappeared, and the new unknown—though still suspected—correspondent came upon the scene.

At the meeting in the old castle she did not know Fineja, who then brought the boy there by appointment—he was so disguised again; but she had become disgusted with the tampering and impositions she had so long been subjected to, and the purse of gold she then bestowed upon the stranger was the last she paid him.

When Una fled down the path by the castle with the boy on that occasion she designed to get away with him, and to provide for him, somehow, in the future. But the stranger suddenly appeared again near the river. She saw both him and Carlos plunge into and cross the Ebro; and, from that hour, she never again set eyes on the false "priest" or her darling boy!

Fineja kept out of Pietro's reach, too, from that moment, as we have seen, for he had twice narrowly escaped death at the hands of the powerful and irate gipsy. And as Pietro did not subsequently see the treacherous scoundrel—who escaped into the woods, just ahead of the boy, whom he did see, fleeing away from him on horseback—he supposed that he had for ever disposed of the brute he so hated when he hurled him into the castle well.

So Pietro never afterwards gave himself any concern about the "dead Fineja." But of this act of Pietro Una never knew anything. She fled with the



[A DISCOVERY.]

boy at Pietro's dictation, and never heard what was the result of the sudden meeting between the gipsy and the stranger there.

But Fineja kept the boy near him until Carlos was almost twelve years old, taught him the manly arts, worked him, exercised him, and hardened him, until one day the youngster ran away from him, and he did not see the lad again until he suddenly found himself confronting his former stout and skilful pupil in the hand-to-hand fight on board the "Lancet," where he knew, at sight of that adversary—who did not know him—that he had found his master with the sword, expert though he was himself.

And this is how Fineja got into that spot. He kept careful watch upon the movements of his victim—Una. After advising her anonymously, by letter, that the boy Carlos had gone East, he supposed, from her affection for her child, that she would readily fall into the trap set for her, and would be very likely to consent to go to Constantinople, or to the world's end, indeed, to flud and be with her child. But he also guessed that she would desire company, and he intended—when he should hear from her—to offer her his services, thus calculating to get near her, then carry out his plans to possess her, as he desired to do.

It was his intention to attend her, expose the fraud that Pietro had imposed on her, inform her that her marriage was a farce, that he himself was no priest, but that he loved her; and, under all these circumstances, he thought he could easily induce her to become his companion, and together they would seek the boy.

Such was Padre Fineja's plot. But he had reckoned without his host.

The watchful knave learned that the Donna Una had taken passage on a brig bound to Smyrna and Constantinople, and he heard no word from her in reply to his late suggestions. The story he had told her by letter was all false. Carlos was then in the north of Spain, and had no thought at that time of going to sea at all. But Fineja didn't know where he was, or what he was doing. He only knew that the boy had got to be too much for him, and had run away. He pretended to Una that her son had already left for the East; and she believed this tale, because it was not unlikely, since he could not be found after careful and thorough search.

And, learning of the secret purpose of Una, Padre Fineja at once determined upon his course.

Thoroughly disguising himself again (as he could well do), he shipped, under a false name, as a common sailor, on board the very vessel she had taken passage in, unbeknown, as she supposed, to any one—and when the lady passenger took possession of

her little room in the cabin of the brig "Malero," which sailed from Tortosa for Constantinople, one evening, the base, false priest found himself one of the hands, snug in that vessel's fore-castle.

And thus they left Spain together, though she never knew he was on board, and never recognized or suspected him there.

Yet he thought he would be able to carry out his plans if he could continue to keep his victim within sight.

Fineja, or Napoli, was a good sailor too, for he had passed several years on the sea before he came to Spain and was picked up by Pietro, who knew of the scamp's misdeeds soon after his reaching that country from Italy.

Carlos knew nothing of the former character of his late tutor, and after he left him he neither knew nor cared what had become of him. Least of all, however, did he imagine that the fellow had turned pirate.

But the "Malero" sailed for Constantinople with the Donna Una as the only passenger, and Fineja as a sailor. The vessel proceeded south, and, after several weeks, caught a gale below Cape Matapan and Cerigo, before which she scudded, and finally drifted to latitude twenty-nine degrees south, far out of her course, and eventually lost her masts, sprung a leak, and was abandoned by captain and crew, who left their one lady passenger in her berth.

The "Malero" floated awhile, was beaten about, and finally was washed ashore, with a few fowls and live animals on board. Some of the fowls and goats got ashore from the deck-coops, and upon those rocks the hull was subsequently discovered by the boy Carlos, as we have seen.

Fineja escaped in one of the boats with a dozen more of the crew, who were picked up and carried into an Italian port, whence he afterwards sailed forth and joined a piratical crew, under his own name of Napoli. They quickly discovered his rare qualities of head and hand for that profession, and he soon got to command a vessel, and had armed boats of his own.

He proved a scourge upon the Archipelago and adjacent seas for a few years, and was greatly feared by mariners. Here he encountered Carlos, when he attacked the "Lancet," some months after the "Malero" was lost; at which time he recognized the boy, and knew that his mother, the Donna Una, had of course perished on the wrecked "Malero"—for she was known to be so near death when the crew abandoned the vessel that she could not safely be moved to the fleeing boats.

Little was known as to what had become of Pietro

the gipsy meantime. After his exploit with Fineja at the castle well he disappeared. He did not trouble Una, for he could not find the boy; and she had forbidden him to approach her until he could produce or enable her to find the child whom she had placed in his charge, and he had unfortunately permitted to be stolen.

The gipsy was too proud spirited to force himself upon Una's favour, under the circumstances of the case; and, though he instituted a vigorous search for months, he finally gave up the chase, supposing that the false priest was dead, and hoping that Una would contrive to find and protect the boy, whom she loved a good deal more fondly than even he did.

After a year or two of wandering, dodging Fineja, and meeting with indifferent success, but still practising his athletic and gladiatorial accomplishments whenever and wherever he could find opponents or opportunity, the boy Carlos found himself in Madrid, where for a while—before going to Barcelona—he took part as "toreador" and "matador" in the ring, and became an adept in the exciting though cruel national sport of Spanish countries known as bull-baiting.

In this amusement, or pastime, as it is termed in Spain, young Carlos very soon came to be most accomplished, and, as a torero, or "finishing man," his quick eye, steady nerves, strong, muscular power, and aptness in handling the small-sword, proved invaluable.

One of the last occasions on which he appeared in the ring, just before sailing on his second voyage, when the company to which Inez was attached had arrived at the capital from Barcelona, and Carlos had gone to Madrid to see Inez before he left the country again, proved a very interesting one; and, as both Carlos and Inez took part in this spirited exhibition before the royal family and government officials at the "Grand Arena de Toros," we will at this point give the reader a description of that stirring and exciting scene.

Inez had but just come over from Barcelona. The bulk of the company had preceded her; but she was shortly to open the ball at her own establishment, where the prospect of an ovation awaited her, for her fame as an equestrienne had reached Madrid ere she arrived.

She returned to Barcelona with Carlos, however, and saw him off, as we know, in company with Victor.

At this exhibition in the Grand Arena Inez was a spectator, while Carlos was a voluntary performer.

(To be continued.)





[THEY MEET AGAIN.]

## THE SNAPT LINK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Sybil's Inheritance," "Evelyn's Plot," &amp;c. &amp;c.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

Yet lives there one whose heedless eye  
Shall scorn thy pale shrine glimmering near,  
With him, sweet girl, may fancy die,  
And joy desert his whole career.

AUBREY LESTRANGE had sinned, and his conscience was scarcely silenced by the deadly opiate he applied to still its remorse, or the yet sharper pangs of desolate terror and isolation which were gradually growing upon him. He was nearly alone now. Hilda, his fiancée, slept in an untimely grave by the side of the father who had trusted and chosen him from among his fellows.

Philip Dacre, the friend of his youth, was utterly estranged from him by the vague jealousy which his own various shortcomings had conjured up. And Madeline—she whom he had loved as truly as his shallow, selfish nature could permit—whom he had wronged beyond redemption or forgiveness—was lost to him for ever by his own fruitless crime.

Only eighteen months since and he had possessed love, and friendship, and comparative innocence. Now the desperate game he had been playing seemed nearly at an end.

Another cast of the die and it would be decided. His whole fate hung on the balance of one thin and fragile thread.

"Hang it!—I shall go mad if I indulge this kind of strain!" he exclaimed, starting from a reverie which had engrossed him, to the neglect of his tempting morning meal. "I wish something would happen—anything rather than this torturing, blank stillness! Strange that De Vere does not write! Perhaps he is playing false, and never intends to carry out his Quixotic fancies. Yet he seemed bent—body and soul—on his one object! Will he accomplish it?" he muttered as he rang the bell violently to ascertain the advent of the post-boy.

But ere his hand was taken from the bell-pull the door opened, and a domestic appeared with the Pandora box of fate.

It was but slenderly filled, however, and Aubrey rapidly turned over the few missives till he saw the post-mark that was uppermost in his mind.

"Cockermouth" brought the very blood to his temples, and he hastily examined the direction to satisfy himself fully of the source from which it came. The writing was far too familiar to him for his present purpose.

The old-fashioned, large characters of his eccentric

uncle figured on the envelope, and danced before his eyes so uneasily as well nigh to preclude its perusal.

"What fresh complication is this?" he muttered as he at last swallowed some hot coffee as a stimulant ere his trembling fingers could break open the large crested seal.

It was brief enough not to test his powers, and characteristic enough to excite his apprehension.

"Denefoot, Oct. 23.

"NEPHEW AUBREY.—If you wish to bury past discord in oblivion, and regain your proper place in the world, as the probable heir to myself, you will at once repair to the Castle, and come prepared to obey the plans I have arranged for your future. If not I shall leave no stone unturned to shut you out of your expected succession.

"Your relative, MARSDEN."

This was a different yet kindred missive to the viscount's last communication. And there was that in its tone which excited the overwrought nerves of the young man to feverish heat.

"Shall I go?" he said, pacing the room hurriedly. "Something betokens that no ordinary consequences will follow this strange summons! Yet it would be madness to refuse and sever every link between us! Perhaps my lucky star is again in the ascendant, and I may defy De Vere, Dacre, and Madeline herself. Money, money!—that's the true power that sways the world—and for that I have sinned and suffered! Yes—I will go, at any cost!"

It was in the very height of a mountain storm that Aubrey Lestrang reached the home of his ancestors, and the cold welcome that awaited him was scarcely such as to warm the blood chilled by its gloomy violence. Only the formal attention of a servant greeted him on his arrival, and he was ushered into a distant apartment of the vast mansion, which seemed silent and deserted in its dreary stillness.

"My lord will see you presently, sir; he never leaves his room till nearly dinner time, but he desired me to say that, when you were refreshed, he would be ready to receive you."

Aubrey had sundry suspicions that this message had been somewhat softened and modified by the instrument of its transmission, but he merely gave an assenting and sufficiently haughty bow, and desired the accommodation of unrecorded boxes and hot water in as brief terms as the earl viscount himself could have employed.

"They're all of a piece!" muttered Stephen as he left the apartment. "It's not like the real gentry; yet there's no mistake about them. It's some 'bee in the bonnet,' that's my belief."

And, with this conclusion, Stephen proceeded to fulfil his duties.

Aubrey's toilet was carefully prepared. No regnant belle could have paused more deliberately over each article of dress or arranged it with greater precision. Yet Lord Marsden was scarcely one to be influenced by the cut of a coat or the wave of clustering hair or curled moustache.

Irreproachably refined and yet severe as were the simple costume and handsome person of his nephew and heir, the viscount's features did not relax one iota of their grim rigidity as he coldly extended his hand, which scarcely touched Aubrey's fingers ere it was withdrawn.

"You are welcome—in one sense, at least—nephew," he said, pointing to a seat near him; "and, if you are wise, it may be that you will be a more frequent guest in my house."

"There shall not be anything wanting on my part to secure so desirable a condition of things," was the bland response. "Our estrangement has surely not been of my seeking, or from my fault."

"Nor need it be," said the viscount, sharply. "It is better we should understand each other, nephew. I have no exalted opinion of you, and I know that you dislike me and wish me out of the path that I block up for your advancement. You are poor, and in debt, as you kindly confided to me, and, by some extraordinary fatuity, the heiress who was to cure every ill in your lot was snatched away almost at the very altar. I scarcely suppose any one attributes such an untimely blow to any shortcomings of yours, Aubrey."

"Of mine! I really do not understand you, my lord," Aubrey gasped, hoarsely, with a blanched agony in his white face that no actor could have summoned up.

"Forgive me, nephew. I really did not think you had so much human feeling in your composition," resumed Lord Marsden, more kindly. "What I meant to imply was that, by an extraordinary caprice of fate, you have been baffled even when nearest the goal of fortune. Now that I am going to give you one more chance it will be remarkable indeed if either your own perversity or accident should hurl you down again into the abyss."

"You scarcely flatter, it must be confessed, my lord," returned Aubrey, forcing a ghastly smile.

"No, it is no habit of mine, I can assure you, nephew. And I tell you candidly, it is simply to ensure, if possible, an infusion of good and noble nature into our dark and selfish race that I am going to give you the opportunity of redeeming the past."

Aubrey was fairly bewildered now.

He began to fancy that his uncle's mind was really

affected by the reclusive life and early excesses of which he had heard vague mention.

"You need not be alarmed, I am perfectly sane—indeed I believe there is not the slightest possible ground for a plea of insanity in our family to justify one crime. It would be difficult to urge it in our cases were an indictment of murder preferred against us."

Again Aubrey moved uneasily, and his startled, nerveless mien seemed to soften his uncle's bitter mood.

"Ah, you have one tender spot in your heart I see, nephew; you are not altogether crushed by the worldly selfishness of your nature. Well, we will avoid that subject, if you will, and proceed to another though somewhat kindred one. Nephew Aubrey, I wish you to marry, and without delay."

"My lord, you are surely jesting, you forget it is not yet a year, and—"

"Nonsense, stuff—a trace to awkward sentiment. Do you suppose I do not comprehend the real motive of your choice of that unfortunate girl or estimate the real cause of your distress at her loss? Boy, you dare not pretend that it was love, or that you even comprehend the passion. Pah! it is not in your nature."

"At least, I should not have chosen Miss Murgrove, unless—"

"She had been an heiress, I believe you," said the viscount, harshly. "I offer you another, and a far richer one—richer in gifts and nobleness, as well as in wealth. Nephew, it is my pleasure you should marry the bride I have chosen for you. If you disobey I shall alienate every shilling possible in her favour, and leave you in the danger and ruin you have invited for yourself."

"It is surely not fair to expect even a conditional answer without knowing who the lady in question may be," said Aubrey, uneasily.

"I expect that you will express your readiness to fulfil my commands, if there is no absolute obstacle in the way," said Lord Marsden, hotly. "The girl I have chosen is as far above you as if of another sphere. It is but to secure to her what I could not otherwise bestow, and to bring something of an angel element into our evil race, that I even contemplate the sacrifice for one so fair and sweet as Gertrude Lindsay."

"Gertrude who, did you say, my lord?" exclaimed the young man, involuntarily.

"Lindsay. Do you know the name?" asked the viscount, sharply.

"I know the Christian name, but it is not an uncommon one. Of course, that can be no proof of identity," returned Aubrey, recovering himself. "To return to the agreeable and flattering subject of your discourse, my lord. You can scarcely expect me to accept a bride whom I have never yet seen."

"Accept! Boy, the question is rather of her acceptance than yours," was the bitter rejoinder. "All that I demand of you is what is quite consistent with a broken-hearted widower, namely, submission to the plans of the head of your house for its maintenance and honour. Rest assured you run no wish of degrading either by your consent."

Aubrey's head bowed in his hands.

There was a fierce contest in his heart between expediency and pride and so-called love—ay, and fear; ghastly fear rose up among the spectres in his path to daunt and dazzle him in his choice. But with Aubrey LeStrange the present was ever more magnified than the misty, vague future, and he cast himself once again on his propitious planet for safety in his risky voyage through life.

"My lord, I will do all that lies in my power to carry out your wishes. I do not expect ever to love again. That is a passion only felt once in a lifetime. But should this *protégée* of yours prove in any way congenial to my feelings, one to whom I could fulfil a husband's part without disgust and repugnance, I shall be perfectly ready to comply with the proposed arrangement."

"You have judged wisely, boy, whatever may be your motives," replied the viscount, "and, as to Miss Lindsay herself, a prince might be proud to win her for his bride."

"May I ask whether the courtship is to be carried on by proxy, in regal fashion, my lord?" inquired Aubrey, with a mock humility. "Will you do me the honour to arrange the preliminaries with my future bride?"

"No, Aubrey LeStrange," was the stern reply. "You shall pay Miss Lindsay, my heiress, the same respect that you gave to Miss Murgrove, the heiress of Rose Mount—only your suit must be prompt and brief, and seconded by the authority and the influence of the head of your house. Now leave me, I would be alone. We shall meet at dinner in an hour or two. See that you act on my directions, without betrayal of my confidence."

In a few minutes Aubrey was alone once again in the apartment appropriated to his use.

There was a fair, pale, corpse-like girl haunting his vision at every turn. There was a dark, flashing, fairy-like creature with warning reproach in her Southern eyes, and her own red blood standing as it were in evidence against him, as he had seen it traced by his own characters on that last interview.

Was he to forget and defy them both?

Was he to accept the little-headed, despised cousin of his murdered Hilda, the object of his vowed vengeance, the fugitive from justice as the successor of three accusing shades?

What hindered his avowal of the truth? and why did he not declare the cause of his distrust, the suspicion that rested on the unknown *protégée* of his wayward relative?

Why did he not declare at once the accusing fact that Gertrude Lindsay was the concealing alias of Gertrude Murgrove?

Time alone and his own conscience could solve these problems and unravel the tangled web of Aubrey LeStrange's tortuous path.

#### CHAPTER XXXVII.

To each his sufferings; all are men,

Condemned alike to groan.

The tender for another's pain,

The unfeeling for his own.

Gertrude had rapidly exchanged her wet and soiled garments for a more fitting dinner costume on her return from that dangerous mountain ramble. Even in that remote and lonely castle the innate refinement of her nature pervaded her every action and habit. Though her toilet was simple and chaste, as befitting alike her feelings and her position, it ever bore the stamp of elegance and exquisite taste in its every arrangement and in its very accordance with her obscure and clouded position in her benefactor's house.

Never perhaps had she unconsciously chosen a more becoming costume than on the evening when Aubrey LeStrange was to make an unexpected guest at Lord Marsden's table.

A simple gray silk dress, with black lace as its sparsely bestowed trimming, black jet ornaments on her neck and arms, and nothing but her simple wealth of rich, silky hair as the coiffure for her small head.

She gave only a hasty glance at her own graceful figure as she left the room, anxious to appear early in the saloon after her unusually long absence from her usual attendance on the invalid.

There was a figure in the large, old apartment, only lighted up at the moment by a roaring wood fire. But its youthful alightness, and the attitude it had assumed leaning on the tall, old-fashioned mantelpiece, at once told her that it was not the infirm viscount who awaited her there. Her heart thrilled violently as the one name ever present in her heart rose to her tongue.

Rupert was on her very lips, though the unpronounced name faded into a slight, half-suppressed scream as the figure turned and exposed the features of Aubrey LeStrange.

Gertrude shrank back. Her hand was on the lock in uncontrollable if useless terror, when the young man sprang towards her and gently removed her fingers, which he retained in his own.

"Do not fear," he said, in the low, soft tones he knew well how to assume. "It is a happy chance that we have met alone. Gertrude, hush your terror and listen."

But it was too sudden a shock for immediate mastery, and the girl's agitation was so evident that it won from the young man a more genuine and gentle sympathy than the conventional courtesy he had prepared.

"Listen and calm yourself, Gertrude," he said, "for everything depends on your self-control. Lord Marsden has no idea of your real name or history as yet. Unless you force me to the disclosure I will not enlighten him further. But I do not conceal from you that it will depend on yourself whether the fate that pursues you will not be carried out to the bitter end. Mark that, Gertrude, and school yourself accordingly. For the present we are strangers remember, and you are safe."

As the slow and feeble steps of the viscount came towards the apartment Aubrey retreated from her side to the original position he had taken up.

"Ha! I perceive you have already become acquainted," said Lord Marsden, with the resumption of the courtly manners that had long been discarded by the eccentric recluse. "But it shall be my task to present you more formally to each other. Gertrude, my dear, this is my nephew and presumptive heir, Mr. Aubrey LeStrange. Nephew, this is my adopted daughter, Miss Gertrude Lindsay. It is my wish that you should treat her with the respect and attention due to her as such."

Aubrey's bow was perfection in its graceful if reserved courtesy.

But Gertrude's truthful nature could not even act a falsehood.

"I have met Mr. LeStrange before," she said. "No introduction was necessary, my lord." The viscount gazed in bewilderment from one to the other.

"How is this, nephew?" he said. "I understood from you that Miss Lindsay was a stranger to you."

"Which is perfectly true," returned Aubrey, stung out of patience by Gertrude's imprudence. "Miss Lindsay is certainly unknown to me. This young lady bore another name when I had the advantage of her acquaintance."

"Gertrude, is this so?" questioned the viscount, anxiously.

"Your lordship may remember that I informed you of that fact when you generously offered me a home," returned the girl, striving bravely for composure. "I did not disguise from you that my life had a wretched and sad history in it."

"It is true, it is true," responded Lord Marsden with a relieved air. "Aubrey, I do not even inquire the name or the circumstances under which you know this dear girl. I can trust her—I will trust her till I have absolute and convincing proof that she has done wrong. And," he added, "if that should come, I shall have faith in all of woman born."

Aubrey bowed sarcastically.

"How will perfect submission to your will, my lord. Next, more; I can assure firmly that it will be no satisfaction to me to recall the painful events with which the past is connected. Miss Lindsay," he added, with a charming simulation of frank and kindly cordiality in his smile and extended hand, "let our new acquaintance date from this day. It will be happier and better for all of us."

Gertrude inclined her head with a dignity that might better befit a nobleman's real than adopted daughter, and a touching look of disappointment came into the young man's face. But she did not even appear to see his extended hand.

Though a frown gathered on Lord Marsden's brow he could not but confess the new charm that pervaded his hitherto gentle and childlike young nurse.

"She is worthy of her station," he reflected; "and I do not blame her pure nature for recoiling instinctively from his light frivolity. Yet, he did speak truth. It is strange—very strange, was the thought that succeeded as he watched the pair during the dinner and evening that succeeded it."

"Miss Lindsay used to sing charmingly," said Aubrey, when he and the viscount rejoined the girl in the drawing-room. "I hope you have not forgotten the art," he added, coming up to the spot where Gertrude had ensconced herself.

"I have discontinued it for so long that I must beg to be excused," she said, scarcely raising her head from her book.

"Is it only kept for Rupert de Vere, that gift of yours?" whispered Aubrey, tauntingly. "Gertrude, that blending of your voices which I remember was a strange emblem of discord between you. He is and has been your deadly, dangerous foe."

"I know it," she murmured. "Be satisfied with that, and leave me in peace."

"Then will you not grant the favour I ask?" he added, in a louder tone. "Lord Marsden, I feel sure you would be charmed with Miss Lindsay's voice, if you have not heard it already."

"Child, is it true? I thought you were only an artist; you never spoke of being a musician," asked the old man. "Go and let me hear your voice; it is long years since melodious strains sounded in this old castle. It will perhaps herald a new existence for his master."

Gertrude shuddered at the memories that the request conjured up, but she crushed them bravely back.

The events of that memorable evening to which Aubrey had so cruelly alluded, when the tragic fate of so many had been virtually decided, seemed to be retranspiring before her; Hilda's bright light-heartedness, Rupert's dark despair, her own misery, and Aubrey's triumph were all vividly present to her as she quickly obeyed her patron's mandate. At least it would prevent the necessity of conversation, and, till she had time to think, such a respite was some boon.

She sat down to the long-disused instrument, which, like all at Denefoot Castle, seemed to be kept scrupulously in order, as in a sort of mockery of the silent desolation of the place, and her fingers wandered abstractedly; but, though strange at first from that long disuse, it was easy to perceive the touch of a master hand in those plaintive, dreamlike chords.

"Sing, child, some old ballad, if you cannot recall a more elaborate song," said Lord Marsden. "There are piles of music in the library, but too old-world for those young fingers. To-morrow you shall examine them."

Gertrude gave one deep gasp as if for breath, then



perhaps by an undefined instinct she began the lovely song from *Marmion*:

"Where shall the lover rest?"

At first her voice was low and tremulous; but as she proceeded, and the very soul and spirit of the words seemed to warm her faltering frame, the tones gained strength, and the almost defiant, weird course of the last verse came with thrilling truth and power from the beautiful and touching organ that had once forced even Rupert's reluctant praise; but she could scarcely have expected the result which her song produced on her auditors.

As she rose from the instrument a deep groan escaped Lord Marsden as he lay back in his chair with closed eyes and pallid cheeks.

"Hush, child, hush; no more. It is a voice from the dead," he said. "Heaven help me! I am not yet forgiven. It is her—her very self!"

Gertrude hastened to his side, as he gazed wildly around, as if his brain was wandering from the present, and soothingly took his hand.

"Calm yourself, my lord; it is only Gertrude, your nurse," she whispered, softly. "I will never sing again unless you like. It is over now; only be calm. Will you go to your room? and I will read you to sleep," she added, gently.

He still fixed on her that strange, earnest gaze. "No," he said, "no. It must be her spirit. I never saw it before till that voice came to haunt me. Do you forgive me, Sybella—my injured wife?"

"Hush, I entreat you, my dear lord. Please ring the bell; we must get Lord Marsden to his room," said Gertrude, hurriedly. "He has been so long ailing, and the music has affected his nerves. It is wrong—treacherous to allow him to wander thus," she added, reproachfully, as she marked the young man's hesitation.

Darting to the bell, she pulled it with a violence that soon brought a domestic, and, with his help, she conducted the invalid to his own chamber.

Aubrey remained in moody and wandering reverie for some hour or more, then, hastily scrawling a few words on a slip of paper, he gave it to a servant for Miss Lindsay, and retired to his apartment.

Gertrude received the billet in her quiet watch by the excited invalid. She had with difficulty soothed him to a brief and precarious slumber on her faithful promise to watch by him while he slept. Now, while his indistinct mutterings came ominously on her ears, she glanced scornfully at the brief message placed silently in her hands.

"GERTRUDE—I must see you, and alone. These cross purposes cannot continue without certain ruin to both. Meet me in the morning where we shall be safe and uninterrupted if you value your own safety and that of others dear to you. A. L."

A bitter smile came on her lips as she read. "Coward and deceiver!" rose to her tongue; but ere she could follow her first impulse, and despatch a brief and firm refusal to the bold request, Lord Marsden awoke.

"Gertrude," he said, in a voice utterly unlike the choked, eager utterances of his wanderings, "are you there? Have I been ill?"

"Not ill, my dear lord; only a little exhausted, that is all," she replied, gently.

"No, no; it was more than that. She came to me, with her gentle, reproachful face, that was worse than a fiend's wrath in its patient gentleness."

"My dear lord, no one has been here except your nephew and myself," she answered, earnestly.

"Then it was in spirit, and to me alone, she appeared," was the determined reply. "Gertrude, it must be that you are her very image, or I could not have mistaken you for her. Perhaps I may yet atone by this one solitary deed of kindness for some of my sins and shortcomings."

"I do not understand you, dear Lord Marsden. Try to sleep again. Believe me, I am most grateful for your generous trust and shelter. I shall bless you as long as I live for the timely aid you afforded me in my despair."

"Will you?" he said, eagerly. "Then the prayers of an angel may do good to alone. But, Gertrude," he added, "you can do more, much more than that. You can bring peace and hope to my last days. I have told him what must be, and he is willing. You must marry him—my nephew—and take the rank that she should have held. Will you promise me, child?"

"Marry whom?" she asked, dreamily.

"Him—my heir—Aubrey. I have arranged it with him, and if you would save me from remorse and misery you will comply. It must be. I have planned it all. I have a wild fancy in my head, but whether true or false it will correct—retrieve all. Will you promise, child? Then I will sleep."

It was a terrible perplexity. Gertrude could see the fever-flush, the glittering eyes, the tremulous movement of the hands, and she guessed but too accurately the danger of a refusal.

yet even to save life she dared not take a false vow.

"If when he has spoken to me we are both satisfied, I will obey your will, my dear, kind benefactor," she said; "only, Lord Marsden, only I would desire to be as a daughter to you while life lasts. Would to Heaven I were blessed with such ties," she murmured, tears flowing down her pale cheeks and dropping on the hand she held.

"Poor child! poor child! Well, it will be the same when you are his wife. There, I am content, and I think she would approve and bless it. Perhaps I can sleep now," he added, wearily, his head sinking back on the pillow with a weary sigh, and in a brief space his regular breathing gave evidence that he was lost to the cares and remorse of this sinful world.

Gertrude was well nigh as motionless and even more pallid than the form by which she watched. A new terror, new perplexities were before her that might well daunt the stoutest. But she did not pause in her decision.

Had the stake been before her as an alternative she would scarcely have demurred in her choice. Better death than treachery or perjured vows, and a prison hall less horrors for her than the galling fetters of Aubrey LeStrange's hollow love.

#### CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The iron may enter in and pierce thy soul,

But cannot kill the love within thee burning;

The tears of misery—thy bitter dole—

Can never quench thy true heart's eager yearning.

"HAVA you seen her? Is she as taking as Talbot reports?" was the eager query of Morgan Willis, a young exquisite, as the striking up of the instruments of the band heralded the drawing up of the curtain before the *début* of the new actress.

"May I ask whom you mean?" inquired Philip Dacre, the gentleman thus addressed. "I suppose even such public property as actresses rejoice in a name."

"What a dry chip you are, Dacre. As if just now any one could not understand that there could be but one 'her' in the case. Of course I mean the new girl, Madeline Vere. They say she is something unique in style. What sort of an actress she may be is quite another affair. Talbot has managed to see her somehow; but then he is such a queer fellow, he'd get through a stone wall if he wanted to pry out anything."

Philip did not reply. In truth his natural taciturn gravity had been deepened to gloom since the late tragic scenes at Rose Mount.

Madeline had disappeared, leaving him in deep though suppressed agony as to her fate. He guessed that she might even encounter want and hardship in her proud struggle with the world. He tried to censure her for her determined renunciation of himself, while yet freed by Aubrey's own treachery from her vows. He strove to call her cold, selfish, base, but in vain.

The tiny but animated and brave creature who had so strangely captivated a heart hitherto impregnable to woman still lived in his every feeling, his every pulse.

He would have taken her to his arms and proudly acknowledged her for his bride, nameless and betrayed as she had been by another's treachery, another's desertion.

Perhaps the attraction which had drawn him from his cynical retirement this night was the similarity of name between the new actress and his lost idol, and when Willis attacked him in the light, rapid persiflage of the day it galled him, he scarcely knew why, as if it had been directed to Madeline herself.

"Has Talbot seen her, then?"

"He declares he has been introduced, and that he is already in her good graces," was the reply. "But then we all know Talbot, and we take off two-thirds at least of the froth from the cream."

"Or rather champagne, I should think," said another gentleman who had just joined them. "Ha! Dacre," he added, "well met! I did not know you were in town at this slow season."

"I might return the same remark to you, Mortmain," returned Philip, touching the hand of the worthy squire who was his fellow trustee in Mr. Magrave's strange bequest. "I suppose some lawsuit or other has brought you up from your ancestral halls."

"Not a word of that, my dear fellow," said the squire, shrugging his shoulders; "we have enough and to spare of that, it seems to me, on our hands. But, hush! the curtain is rising," he said, with true rural respect for an audience and a *débutante*.

There was a hushed stillness that spoke of the presence of some deep excitement in the large audience as the scene became visible. For the moment it was only an empty apartment that greeted their anxious eyes, but still they were strained in eager anticipation of what was uppermost in the minds of all—the advent of the new actress.

It came at last.

A small, fairy-like creature in delicate, floating white, that seemed like the gossamer, ethereal drapery of a spirit, appeared on the stage, with step so light that a harebell would scarcely bend beneath its pressure, and with brilliant, flashing eyes, sparkling like the gems that she wore on her throat and arms.

For a moment all seemed mutely entranced, as by the appearance of some spiritual being, a creature of no earthly mould, too rare and too delicate for the usual ovation of encouraging cheers.

But as she advanced, and the low, musical tones of her voice recalled them to the undoubted fact that a woman, young and beautiful, stood timidly before them, the spell was broken, and one universal tempest of sound filled the large and crowded building.

"By Jove! what an angel, or rather spirit!" said young Willis as the girl bent gracefully again and again to the ovation. "I mean one expects an angel to have golden hair and all that sort of thing, eh, Dacre?"

But as he turned he saw that he was addressing an empty space. Philip Dacre had disappeared during that loud uproar, and as it hushed a general stillness equally remarkable succeeded to the previous tumult.

It seemed as if the audience were as eager to test the powers as to admire the rare beauty of their new favourite, and the sound even of a suppressed voice brought forth a hiss on the offender's head.

It was a well-known and favourite play, "The Lady of Lyons," but those who were most familiar with it fancied they could never have thoroughly comprehended its beauty before. That Titania-like creature, with her variety of passionate and womanly emotions, her graceful caprices, her strange Southern witchery, gave a new meaning, a fresh charm to each action, each sentence, that made the part a new creation of her own.

Philip Dacre—where was he?

Enconced in the recess of the stage box, where, as he believed, no eye could detect his intense, overpowering interest in that popular idol, he watched every look and gesture of that fascinating creature with torturing jealousy.

For a time he had doubted his own senses. The lights, the disguise of the novel costume, the sad and mournful guise in which he had last bidden farewell to that witching girl, tended to mystify her even to his familiar eyes.

But when he heard her voice, when he came near enough to dwell on her features in their varied play, he could not cherish the last fond hope of his own error.

Madeline, the betrayed victim of Aubrey LeStrange, the mysterious heroine in that terrible tragedy, and his own first and sole love, had cast aside the last link which could bind her to the past and to the position she had assumed.

Henceforth she was the slave of the public, the mark for insolent admiration, the talk of the clubs and the town as the "new actress," the heroine of countless tales, the object of real or of invented scandal and censure.

How he writhed as any licensed hand touched her fairy form, as words of love were poured out at her feet, or pronounced in her ringing tones.

Philip could realize at that moment some of the demon temptation that had brought crime on one and misery on so many in that frightful murder at Rose Mount.

At length the long torture was over. The play ended amid tears and smiles and a storm of applause, and Madeline was called before the curtain to receive the fresh ovation of her admirers.

Philip fancied in his jealous frenzy that the stage lover who led her forward pressed the hand he held and gazed in the bright face with unlicensed warmth, and that she—his Madeline—permitted if she did not return the homage.

It was too much. At least she should be reminded of the past.

He came forward to the front of the box where he sat, and gave an ironical "Bravo" in tones so distinct that she could distinguish them even amidst the chorus of applause.

She started round to the spot whence that well-known and too-well-loved voice came, and their eyes met.

Poor Madeline! That frown, that scornful bitterness which Philip's stern features wore was the last drop in her cup of bitterness. All else had been lost for her save the belief in his love and his confidence, now even that slender hope was destroyed.

Already exhausted and over-strained by the novel exertion and excitement of the evening, her self-control gave way. She snatched her hand from the grasp of her supporter and made one eager step with outstretched, deprecating arms towards him who alone in that sea of upturned faces filled her eyes and heart.

But her head swam, her steps faltered with the sudden gust of emotion; she reeled, staggered fatally in that dangerous and, to her, unfamiliar scene.

Ere the astonished "escort" could recover his orthodox position at her side she had gone too near the footlights, in her light, floating dress, and one shriek of horror and alarm rose from the audience.

The beautiful *débütante*, the evening's idol, was in flames! and, as it seemed to the excited crowd, actually sinking in the fiery bed which was rising up around her as a devouring grave.

For some seconds the confusion seemed bewildering. Fainting, screams, cries, suggestions, were mingled in wild tumult. Then a tall figure bounded like a tiger on the stage and shook off the trembling, pale "lover," who stood, white and paralyzed, gazing at the doomed girl.

"Off, idiot!" shouted Philip Dacre's stern voice. "Give her to me in death, at least."

He seized the heavy baize curtain that hung half opened behind the scene, and with the supernatural strength of despair tore down some of its thick folds.

Then, approaching the sufferer, he literally enfolded the flaming form in his strong arms within the protection of the smothering baize, and clasped her tight, close, strained to his very heart, till the terrible conflagration was subdued, and only the poor burnt tatters and the slight, half-senseless form remained within that friendly cloak.

Senseless—yes, perhaps to all but a consciousness of exquisite suffering and exquisite joy.

She was tortured with fiery pain, exhausted and nerveless with overpowering emotions, yet she could feel a sense of strange safety and relief in lying within Philip Dacre's arms, and comprehending the deep love that still so mightily swayed his stern nature.

"Back, back," he said, fiercely, as they crowded round him with offers of help and outstretched arms to receive his burden; "touch her at your peril!"

They shrank involuntarily from his wild and pallid face and his unnatural, giant strides as he hurried his light burden from the stage.

His own hands were well nigh skinned with the scorched flame; every touch of that rough woollen cloak was like torture to these wounds.

But he heeded it not, felt it not; he only knew, when he laid his heart's idol on the first couch which presented itself in the room whither the terrified manager ushered him, that the brilliant eyes were closed, the flushed cheek colourless, the wealth of dark hair scorching and dried round the wounded figure, as if Death had already claimed its prey.

Was he her murderer—he who would have laid down his life for hers?

(To be continued.)

## MYSTERY OF THE HAUNTED GRANGE.

### CHAPTER XV.

THE youthful guardman gave one regretful sigh as he flung his cherished, newly lighted cigar away, and arose. Some men are born for the martyr's cross and palm, and he was one of them. Even Lady Charteris, usually the most silent and quietest of creatures herself, was suddenly going in for excitement, and he was singled out to be the victim of her caprice.

He gave her his arm, with one gentle glance of reproachful surprise, quite thrown away upon her, as it chanced, and led her down below.

A thousand—a million, it seemed—coloured lamps flickered among the trees, the band still played, lads and lasses still tripped on "the light fantastic," and "guffers" and "goodies" sat on rustic benches, and contentedly watched the fun. They would adjourn to the great domed entrance-hall presently, where a second feast awaited them, and at ten o'clock this goodly company would retire, with three cheers, and "many happy returns to Mr. Guy, Heaven bless him!"

That indefatigable Polly Mason was dancing again, this time with a son of a neighbouring squire, who had seen her a score of times before and never noticed her until to-night. She was whirling around in a polka as lightly as though she trod on air and it had been her first dances instead of her twenty-first.

Guy looked at her in undisguised admiration. "I wouldn't have believed it," he murmured, gently, "if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, that any human creature could possess the staying power of that girl! They call woman the weaker sex!"

At this juncture a man approached from the opposite direction, and stood among some out-siders until the polka should be concluded.

Lady Charteris and her escort were drawing near, but neither noticed this new-comer until Miss Mason herself chanced to spy him.

"Duke," she cried, "you haven't come for me so soon! Please, Mr. Bassett, I must speak to my cousin Duke."

Mr. Bassett released her, and Polly, all aglow, her blue eyes shining like azure stars, her lips laughing and apart, tossing back her short curls, ran up to him.

"You haven't come for me so soon, have you, Duke? I can't go; it's too soon. I'll stay until it's all over. Oh, Duke!" lowering her voice, and her face beaming, "it has been a heavenly afternoon!"

"I'm past my time at the theatre, Polly," Duke said; "and I only called to tell you that as this gathering is to break up two or three hours earlier than you thought, you had better go home in Warren's tax-cart, with Alice. He'll drive you down. I can't come for you as early as ten, you know."

Polly looked down demurely, conscious smiles curling her pretty lips, and a curious light in her eyes.

"Very well, Duke; I'll get home all safe. What a pity you can't stay and enjoy the fun too!"

"I don't care for the fun. I'm glad you're enjoying yourself. Good night, little Polly."

There was a touch of sadness in Duke's tone. It was dawning on him dimly that the day was near when Polly would be his pet and plaything no more, but a woman. He was turning away, when suddenly his eye fell upon a face that rooted him to the spot—that seemed to stop the very beating of his heart. It was only a lady—a pale, black-robed lady, leaning on the arm of Mr. Guy Earlecourt—a lady who looked at him with dark, solemn eyes, and a face that seemed carved in ivory.

Their eyes met, and Lady Charteris knew at last that her child, Robert Lisle's child, the baby daughter whom fourteen years ago she had resigned, stood yonder, fresh and beautiful, in the moonlight, among Lord Montalien's dependents.

At ten o'clock, precisely, the merry assembly broke up and departed, with ringing cheers for my lord's younger son, to their humble homes.

And Polly was driven home in the tax-cart, of course, by Mathew Warren! Was she, indeed? Alice went in the tax-cart dutifully, if you like, and Eliza Long was seen home by the young man from the haberdasher's; but Allan Fane, forgetful of the Honourable Diana, her three thousand a year, the gentle-folks making merry in the long drawing-rooms—forgetful of all the hopes and ambitions of his life—walked home through the blue moonlit night with Polly Mason!

The nine o'clock sunshine streaming through Polly's window awoke her next morning. Polly, as a rule, was inclined to be lazy in the morning, but brisk Rosanna routed her out without mercy at six. To-day she let her sleep.

The child hadn't got home until half-past eleven—three miles, you know, on a lovely moonlight night, with a handsome young man beside you, constitute a long walk.

Rosanna knew nothing of the handsome young man, she knew nothing of the hours during which little Polly tossed on her bed, and could not sleep.

Sleep! The red, the yellow, the purple lights flashed before her, the band music clashed in her ears, and the faces of Allan Fane and Guy Earlecourt swam in a golden mist. Her breast was full of delicious unrest; he was coming to-morrow, and all the to-morrows—and this was bliss, this was love.

Poor little Polly!

All this glad tumult faded away in sleep—she awoke with a sort of guilty start to see the new day's sunshine. She felt tired, and worn, and suddenly grown old.

Yesterday she had been a little girl running wild about the streets of Speckhaven, tearing her clothes, and tormenting Rosanna. She felt as if all that was over, as if a gulf lay between the Polly of yesterday and the Miss Mason of to-day.

Yes, she was "Miss Mason;" they had called her so; she was a grown-up young woman, whom gentlemen asked to dance, and nearly quarrelled over.

She got up slowly and dressed herself. How ugly her well-washed, well-mended blue and white gingham looked; how like a boy's was her Holland blouse, belted round her slim waist by a leather strap!

Why couldn't she wear pink silk like Miss Maud Charteris, and bind back her auburn locks with rosy ribbons?

Her face looked thinner and paler than ever in the garish morning sun—she hadn't a trace of good looks about her. She was what Eliza Long had called her, "a red-haired tomboy," and nothing more.

Why—oh, why! had she had her hair cropped?

The reaction had come, and Polly was miserable. Probably she would feel better after her breakfast; she said her prayers and went down. Duke was busy in his painting-room, Rosanna was at work just outside the back door up to her elbows in suds. Polly's toast and tea awaited her.

Rosanna saw her heavy eyes, and pale cheeks, and languid movements, and grew alarmed.

"There's what comes of dancing and staying out

till midnight. Look at that child's face!" she exclaimed. "Put on your hat and go out, and try if the fresh air will blow a little life into your dead eyes and pale cheeks."

"Yes, Rosanna," Polly said, with very unwonted meekness, and went.

She did not go far, however. She perched herself on the garden wall, and went wandering off into a dreamy reverie.

The faces of yesterday shone before her in the sunshine—the splendid face of Guy Earlecourt, with its brown, brilliant eyes, and lazy, beautiful smile.

The face of Allan Fane, fair, womanish, perhaps, but eminently good-looking, and, what Polly prized more, aristocratic.

Tall, haughty Diana Hutton, dark, pensive Lady Charteris, little Miss Maud, with her rose-silk and streaming ribbons. Such high-bred faces all, such lofty, high-sounding names.

And she was Polly Mason. Polly Mason, hopelessly vulgar and common.

"I suppose I was christened Mary," the young lady thought. "Mary's no great things, but it's better than Polly."

Then mechanically she fell to drawing. The face that haunted her most was that which her pencil drew almost without volition of her own.

The pencil sketch was careless and crude, but bold and full of power; so absorbed did she become over her work that she never heard approaching footsteps, and a voice at her elbow suddenly made her jump.

"A very good likeness, Miss Mason; but don't you think you have flattered a little—just a little—our friend Guy?"

"Mr. Fane!"

Polly jumped from her perch, with a gasp, and tried to hide away her drawing, in overwhelming confusion.

What would he think of her? What could he think, but that she had had the audacity to fall in love with this splendid young guardsman, who had asked her for unlimited dances, then only waited with her twice?

But Mr. Fane set her at her ease. He did feel a twinge of jealousy—the sparkling face had pursued him in dreams all night—it was such a rare face—such a piquant face. Pretty faces there were by the score, but only one Polly Mason.

"You promised to show me the seaside cave where you and Miss Alice Warren used to play Robinson Crusoe and Man Friday," he said, "and I have come to claim your promise. This very afternoon, Miss Polly, I mean to drive you up to the Priory, and have our first sitting for the Fair Rosamond. Miss Hutton has been also kind enough to pose for my Queen Eleanor."

"I think Queen Eleanor must have looked like that," answered Polly, remembering the haughty glances Miss Hutton had cast upon her humble self yesterday. "She seems as though she could give a rival that pleasant choice between the poison bowl and the dagger any day. No, thank you, Mr. Fane, I won't take your arm, people don't do that unless—"

She stopped and blushed.

"Unless what, Miss Mason? Unless they are engaged—is that what you mean? I see it is. Ah!" with a telling glance under Polly's old sun hat.

"That, Miss Mason, would be too much happiness." He really thought so at the moment. When this young gentleman was fascinated by a pretty girl he generally hunted down his prey with something of an Indian trapper's intensity.

The artist must admire those cloudless blue eyes, that angelic mouth, those serene lines of future beauty, let the man cling to Miss Hutton's money-bags ever so closely.

Miss Long saw them from her window, and snored and felt bitterly envious, and more full of hatred towards that "forward minx" than ever.

They went down to the seashore, where the long blue waves washed up on the sands, and the sunlight sparkled until it looked like a sea of gold and fire, where the fishing-boats glided and the fishermen on the hot sands sang as they mended their nets.

What does Byron say of youth and beauty and the sea?—a dangerous combination truly, and she was so romantic and he was an artist!

How close to the stars we seemed. That night on the sands by the sea.

"If I could only paint all this—that sea of gold, that sky of fire and azure, those swarthy toilers of the deep, and you, Polly, and immortalize myself, and—lay my laurel-crown at your feet!"

It was the first time he had called her Polly, and even this was doing tolerably fast. Her cheeks were red enough now to suit Rosanna could she have seen them.

Mr. Allan Fane pulled himself up with a gasp, feeling that he was sinking into bottomless quagmires and quicksands of untold danger.



"Good Heaven!" he thought, "what am I saying to this child? I shall be telling her I am in love with her next. I might have known how it would be," Mr. Fane concluded, rather dejectedly, "when I got her to bring me to this confounded place. The seashore, a fine day or a moonlight night, and a pretty girl always did play the dickens with me, and, I dare say, always will."

Mr. Fane, seeing his danger, and wise from past sad experience, shied off this dangerous ground, and betook himself to pleasant generalities. He was a good talker, as talking goes in general society, *au fait* of the last new opera, novel, actress, and latest Paris fashions, and all those topics were deliciously fresh and new to Polly.

Was this love at first sight, Polly wondered; and straightway there arose before her a bridal vision—Mr. Allan Fane looking unutterably patrician, and she in floating white, with a point-lace veil and orange blossoms, and the church thronged with eager, envious lookers-on, and after that a rose-coloured life of perpetual Paris winters and London seasons and new bonnets and jewellery, and the opera and balls.

They went into the seaside cave together, and the artist made a sketch of it and the girl, with the wide sea before her and the sunlight on her sweet, fair face.

Then Miss Mason sang for him, that he might hear the echoing along the rocky roof, and Allan Fane wondered more and more.

Such a voice—rare, sweet, and powerful. She sang the song young Quintin Durward listened to in rapture so many years ago in the quaint old French town, and her thoughts left Allan Fane, and an olive face shone before her, lit by two brown eyes—the face of Lord Montalien's favourite son.

"Ah! County Guy! the hour is nigh,  
The sun has left the sea,  
The orange flower perfumes the bower,  
The breeze is on the sea.  
The lark whose lay has thrilled all day  
Sits hushed, his partner nigh,  
Breeze, bird, and flower confess the hour,  
But where is County Guy?"

The village maid steals through the shade,  
Her lover's suit to hear;  
No beauty sky, by lattice high,  
Sings high-born cavalier.  
The star of love, all stars above,  
Now reigns o'er earth and sky,  
And high and low his influence know,  
But where is County Guy?"

"Here!" answered a voice, as the last note died away, "if you mean me!"

To the immense confusion of Polly, and the unconcealed annoyance of Allan Fane, Guy Earls court stepped round the rocky entrance into the grotto.

"Miss Mason, your voice is superb—equal to Lind's with training. 'Pon my honour I thought it might be Circe or Calypso, or those what-you-call-em, sirens, you know, of the *Ægean* Sea, holding a concert by mistake on the Lincolnshire coast."

"What brought you here, Earls court?" demanded the artist, with no friendly accent.

Guy looked at him lazily from under his thick, black lashes.

"In the character of 'Paul Fry,' for this occasion only. Well, my dear boy, don't pour the vials of your wrath on me—I am Beauty's messenger. In other words you promised to drive Lady Charteris and Cousin Di over to Heatherholme, after luncheon, and as Di really seems anxious to go I came in search of you. Had I known—" with a glance at Polly, but Mr. Fane cut in rather abruptly:

"I asked Miss Mason to bring me here that I might sketch this grotto. Shall we return, Miss Mason, or—"

"Oh, yes, please," Polly answered, shrinking away, she hardly knew why, under the gaze of the brown eyes she thought the most beautiful on earth. "They will wonder where I have gone to at home."

Mr. Fane looked at Mr. Earls court, as if saying: "You hear! You're not wanted. Be kind enough to go."

The young guardsman answered his glance, and, walking after Polly, began asking her questions about the town and the sands, as though the topography of Speckhaven had become the vital interest of his life.

Polly-Mason walked back through the noonday brightness with two gallants, instead of one, and flashed a look upon Eliza Long, as she passed her windows, that made that young lady grind her teeth for very envy.

"Montalien's been dull this morning," Guy was saying, plaintively. "Di's been sulky, Lady Charteris a prey to green and yellow melancholy. Frank not to be found—I didn't look in the bailiff's cottage—and little Maud was the only human creature in the place to speak to. You needn't look so ferocious Fane, at my seeking you out in my dire necessity, need he, Miss Mason?"

Polly did not feel as if the interruption were by any means an unwelcome one.

Both gentlemen were delightful, no doubt, but Mr. Guy Earls court decidedly the more delightful of the two.

She walked home in a happy trance, and it was all too soon when the little garden gate came in sight.

Duke could be seen, with his shirt sleeves rolled up above the elbows, painting in his big, bare, front room.

The two young gentlemen said good-bye to Polly, and left her.

"Who is that young swell in the chimney-pot hat and dandy boots?" Duke asked, when Polly paid her afternoon visit to his painting-room. "I don't mean Guy Earls court, you understand."

"The other was Mr. Allan Fane," Polly responded, looking out of the window. "He's an artist, Duke, and wants me to sit to him for *Fair Rosamond*."

"Allan Fane! Allan Fane!" Duke repeated, stroking the red and yellow stubble on his chin. "I've heard that name before, and I have seen that face somewhere. It's a face I don't like, duchess; it's a womanish face, a false face, or I'm greatly mistaken."

Polly looked at him reproachfully.

"That's not like you, Duke," she said; "you don't often speak ill of the absent, and of a stranger, too, whom you don't know. Mr. Fane was very, very kind to me yesterday, and—and—he came home with me last night. He didn't let me sit out a single dance, and he left the ladies at the Priory to wait on me, and of course I feel grateful and all that."

Duke looked after her as she walked out of the room with a wistful light in his eyes—the yearning light you see sometimes in the eyes of a dog. Polly had been under his shelter for fourteen years—was the day at hand when all his love could shield her from danger no longer?

Polly went through her usual afternoon's work of helping Rosanna in a state of dreamy happiness, little trills of song bubbling to her lips, smiles and dimples chasing each other over her face.

She was always happy, but somehow the sun never shone so brightly nor life ever seemed so sweet as to-day.

Rosanna looked at her, and congratulated herself that she had made her go out that morning. And presently, when tea was over, she took her hat and went to the gate to watch the new moon rise—and wish—what did little Polly wish? It was very quiet. The new moon shining in the opal sky, a nightingale singing yonder in Montalien woods, the soft flutter of the evening wind, sweet from the sea; the rich odour of Rosanna's roses and geraniums in the open window—that was the scene. And, fairer than all, as Mr. Allan Fane could have told her, had he been there to see the tall, slim girl, with the sweet, happy face, and dreamy eyes of blue, softly singing "The Young May Moon."

As she stood there a group of four came up the road from the town. Polly's dreamy eyes turned from that silver sickle in the purple sky, and brightened into a light not so pleasant to see as she beheld her arch enemy, Eliza Long. Miss Long was galvanized by the haberdasher's clerk, and behind came Alice Warren and her "young man," Peter Jenkins, of the Mill.

(To be continued.)

**SHAPING METALS.**—In a process lately proposed for shaping metals a mould is made in sections to suit the article required, and a sheet of metal is placed in it, after which a cover is clamped on to the mould, and water-pressure is conveyed to the interior by a pipe, whereby the metal is expanded to the counterpart of the mould.

**SUNNY HOMES.**—Parents ought to know that every successful effort to make home bright is so much accomplished towards foiling the evil one. Never frown on innocent enjoyment among children. It is as natural to their age as your armchair and slippers are to yours, and it is just as proper too. Let children enjoy their youth in all its innocent gaiety; their future may be dark enough to need the memory of a happy childhood to make it endurable.

**MONUMENT OF THE CHICAGO FIRE.**—An odd monument is about to be set up to record the recent dreadful fire. It is to be erected in the Central Park, West Chicago, one of the large city parks, on a site just within the principal entrance, originally designed for a monument. The materials are relics of the late fire that destroyed the entire business portion of the city together with about one-third of the residences, and consist of iron safes, columns, sculptured stone cornice and ornaments, which have been presented for the purpose, and are now being hauled to the site. The height of it will depend to some extent upon the amount of material collected;

it will exceed 100 feet. The work of construction will commence as soon as the weather will permit. The architect is Mr. W. L. B. Jenney, of Chicago.

**TICHBORNE RUMOURS.**—All sorts of rumours are current about the Tichborne case. A correspondent understands that some forty witnesses will be called by Sir John Coleridge, and that one of the strongest will be Mrs. Radcliffe (Kate Doughty). Another witness, according to the statement of another correspondent, will be Miss Loder, who will declare that the claimant is her lover, Arthur Orton to wit. When these interesting examinations will come on it is impossible to say. A farther report is that Lord Bellevue will come forward to swear that when he was at school he and the real Roger Tichborne tattooed each other, and that his lordship will bare his arm and call upon the claimant to do likewise.

**SPURGEON'S EXPERIENCES IN ROME.**—Mr. Spurgeon has been to Rome, and has given a lecture on his experiences to an audience of 7,000, at his Tabernacle. He described St. Peter's as "a big joss-house, an idol shop, and nothing better. It was not the worst image house in Rome, but it was bad enough, and whatever might be said by those who turned to and professed the Catholic faith, if they were not idolaters, there were no idolaters on earth." He saw the miraculous print of St. Peter's image on the walls of a dungeon in which, according to tradition, he had been confined—made when he was pushed against it by the brutality of his guards—saw, and was wrought in his heart. He looked at the Vatican, saw the Papal soldier higher up on the flight of steps than the Italian soldier, who stood sentry at the door, and was convinced that the Papal Government has been the worst on earth; but he had his fears for the stability of the Italian Government, as it had sprung out of a political and not a religious revolution.

## A DARING GAME;

OR,  
NEVA'S THREE LOVERS.

### CHAPTER VII.

THE dingy little packet-boat from Calais to Dover, carrying the mails, bore her usual complement of passengers that bright midsummer day upon which young Neva Wynde returned after years of absence to her own country.

A few tall, moustached Frenchmen, with cigars in their mouths; a German or two with the inevitable pipe; a few students returning from foreign universities; a few pedestrian tourists with hobnailed shoes, preposterous alpenstocks, and a proudly displayed Bradshaw or Murray; several stout and puffy Englishmen, and a goodly number of rotund Englishwomen, with muslin dresses and fur tippets in odd contrast made up the majority of the passengers.

Some of these people walked about, affecting to enjoy the fresh breeze; others studied the now useless guide-book, recalling their adventures; and others scanned the blue shores of France alternately with the chalk cliffs of England through the tourist glasses slung from their shoulders, and wondered aloud if the passage would be accomplished in the usual ninety minutes.

An odd feature of a Channel packet is the total disregard of appearances manifested by the passengers upon it.

Very few, if any, persons go below into the stuffy little cabins, and doubting souls provide themselves with ominous white bowls at the outset of the voyage, and should illness come upon them they proceed to make themselves comfortable upon the deck, or moan, or mutter imprecations, according to the sex of the sufferer, totally unmindful and oblivious of lookers on.

In a corner by herself, at one side of the boat, her thick green veil over her face shrouding a bowl that filled her lap, sat Artress, Lady Wynde's gray companion, in a condition of abject misery. She had no thought of any one but herself in that crisis of her physical career, and gave no heed to her young charge, the one great desire of her soul being to find herself once more upon solid land.

At the opposite side of the boat, leaning lightly upon the rail, and looking back with wistful, longing eyes upon the fading blue of the French shores, stood a young girl who was strangely lovely.

She was slender and graceful as a swaying reed, and her lithe, light figure carried itself with a slight hauteur that was inexplicably charming. Her high-bred manner, her evident gentleness and sweetness, betrayed thorough culture of heart and mind. Her face was a rare poem. The features were slightly irregular, and, even in repose, with a grave shadow upon her fair brows, her countenance had a bright, piquant witchery. Her complexion was very pure and fair, her lips a vivid scarlet, and under her broad forehead a pair of wondrous red-brown eyes sparkled and glowed with strange brilliancy. Her hair, very abundant, and of a reddish-brown tint as

rare as beautiful, was gathered into braids at the back of her small, noble head.

She was dressed in a travelling suit of black cashmere, and wore a black hat surmounted with a scarlet wing.

She was Neva Wynde, the owner of Hawkhurst, one of the greatest heiresses in England, and now the object of the sinister machinations of her handsome stepmother and Craven Black.

Her school-days were over, and she was on her way to a home she had not visited for years, and to a guardian whom she did not know, but one who was secretly her enemy. She had emerged from the pleasant security of the school-room into a region of perils.

A premonition of the dangers before her seemed almost to come upon her now, and into her glowing eyes crept a look of sorrowful yearning and of passionate protest against the friendlessness of her lot.

A few feet distant from her, also leaning upon the railing, stood a young man, whose gaze, ostensibly fixed upon the French coast, now and then rested upon the girl's speaking face with an expression of keen admiration and interest. He thought in his own soul that he had never seen a being so fresh, so dainty, so pure, so rarely beautiful. She seemed utterly alone. No one inquired how she felt, or offered her a seat, or looked after her, and her young admirer wondered if she were all alone in the world, as she seemed.

He was speculating upon the subject when a sudden lurch of the boat upon the short-chopping Channel waves, caused Neva to involuntarily loosen her hold upon the railing, and pitched her abruptly along the deck towards him.

He sprang forward and caught her in his arms. She recovered her equilibrium upon the instant, and again grasped the railing, blushing, confused, and murmuring her thanks for his civility.

"The Channel is rough to-day," remarked the young gentleman. "Shall I not find you a seat?"

"Thank you, no," returned Neva, in her sweet, low, cultured voice. "I prefer standing."

The words were simple enough, and her manner was quiet and reserved, but her voice went to the young man's heart, thrilling it with a strange sensation. He did not attempt a retreat, and Neva looked up at him with something of surprise in her glorious red-brown eyes.

As he encountered her full gaze his face flushed, his eyes glowed, and a warm smile curved his mouth.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but are you not Miss Wynde, of Hawkhurst?"

Neva bowed assent, with an increasing surprise.

"I was sure, when I met your full glance, that you were Neva Wynde," cried the young gentleman. "You do not remember me, I see; yet when you went away to that odious Paris school you and I parted with tears, and you promised to be true to me, little Neva. And you have forgotten me—"

"No, no," cried the young girl, an answering glow coming into her face, and her eyes shining like suns. "Is it really you, Arthur? How you have changed!"

She held out her hand to him, and he clasped it with a warm, lingering pressure. Her eyes scanned his face in an earnest scrutiny, and she blushed again when she saw how handsome he was and how like he was to an ideal she had long cherished in the very depths of her young soul.

He was fair, with warm blue eyes, golden hair, and a moustache of tawny gold. His features were fine and clearly cut. He had a frank, noble face, and his sunny eyes betrayed a generous soul.

One who ran might read in his countenance a brave, dauntless soul, a grand, unselfish nature, an enlightened spirit, quick sympathies, and an honest, truthful, resolute character.

Neva thought, as she shyly regarded him, that he was very like a hero of romance.

"I can hardly believe that you are Arthur," she said, smiling, her face softly flushing. "You are not at all like the Arthur Towyn I knew, yet I can see the old boyish gaiety and brightness of spirit. Your moustache has changed your looks greatly, Lord Towyn."

"It makes me look older perhaps," said Lord Towyn, gravely, "and as I am but twenty-three, and have a ward who is eighteen years old, it becomes me to produce as venerable an appearance as possible. Of course you are aware, Neva, that I am one of the three trustees or guardians of your entire property, appointed by your father in his will?"

"Yes, I know it a year ago," replied Neva, the brightness fading a little from her face. "Mr. Atkins wrote me about papa's will. Mr. Atkins and Sir John Freise are the two other executors. You are very young for such an appointment, are you not, Lord Towyn?"

"That is a fault that time will mend," said his lordship, smiling. "I am young for the post, but Sir Harold Wynde knew that he could trust me, especially with two older heads to direct me. I am

only the least of three, you know, and my youth was meant to balance Sir John Freise's age. Your school life is over, is it not, Miss Wynde?"

"Yes, it is over," and Neva sighed. "I am on my way to a new sort of life, and to new acquaintances and friends. I feel a sort of terror of my future, Lord Towyn. I am foolish, I know, but a dread comes over me when I look forward to going home. Home! Ah, all that made the old house home has vanished. My poor brother George lies in an Indian grave. Papa—poor papa—"

Her voice broke down, and she averted her head. Young Lord Towyn came nearer to her. He longed to press her hand and to offer her his sympathy. He comprehended her desolation, and the unhealed wound caused by Sir Harold's fate. His heart bled for her.

He had known Neva Wynde from her earliest childhood. They had played together in the woods and gardens at Hawkhurst, and before Neva had been sent to her foreign school, the child pair had betrothed themselves, and vowed an eternal fidelity to each other.

The late Earl Towyn, the father of Arthur, and Sir Harold Wynde had been college mates; and it had been their dearest wish to unite their families in the persons of their children, but they had been too wise to broach the idea to the young couple.

They had, however, encouraged the affection of Arthur and Neva for each other, and had looked forward hopefully to the time when that childish affection should ripen into the love of manhood and womanhood.

Soon after Neva's departure for school Lord Towyn had died, and his son, then at college, had become earl in his stead.

A mysterious fate had also removed Sir Harold Wynde; and Neva's step-mother, as is known to the reader, had schemes of her own in regard to Neva's marriage.

The young earl's mute sympathy seemed to penetrate to Neva's heart, for presently she turned her face again to him, and although her mouth quivered, her eyes were brave, as she said, brokenly:

"You will think me unchristian, Lord Towyn, but I cannot become reconciled to the manner of papa's death. If he had but died like George, peacefully in his bed; but his fate was so horrible—so awful! I sometimes fancy in the night that I can hear his cries and moans. In my own imagination I have witnessed his awful death a thousand times. The horror of it is as fresh to me now as when the news first came. Shall I ever get used to my sorrow? Will the time ever come when I can think of papa with the calmness and resignation with which I think of my poor brother?"

"It was horrible, even to me, beyond all words to describe," said the young earl, softly. "I loved Sir Harold only less than my own father, and I have mourned for him as if I had been his son. All ordinary words of consolation seem a mockery to one who mourns a friend who perished as he did. He was vigorous and young for his years, noble, and true, and good. Let us hope that his pangs and terrors were but brief, Neva. Perhaps his death was not so terrible to him as it seems to us. It is better so to die than to languish for years a prey to some excruciating disease. And let us remember that 'whatever is right.' Instead of dwelling on the manner of his death, let us reflect that his death was but the opening to him of the gates of life eternal."

Neva did not answer, but her face was very grave and tender, and her sun-like eyes glowed with a softer radiance.

There was a brief silence between them, and finally Neva said, with an abrupt change of the subject:

"Do you know Lady Wynde, Lord Towyn?"

"I have met her several times, but not since Sir Harold's death," was the reply. "Is she travelling with you?"

And the young earl glanced around the deck.

"No, she sent her companion for me. She is on the other side of the boat. I have never seen Lady Wynde."

Lord Towyn looked his astonishment.

"Have you not been home since your father's marriage, nor since his death, Miss Wynde?" he asked.

"No. Papa came once to see me at my school after his marriage, but he did not bring his wife. I have a picture of her which papa sent me. He must have adored her. His letters were full of loving praises of her, and in the last letter he wrote he told me that he desired me to love and obey her as if she were my own mother. His wishes are sacred to me now, and I shall try to love her. Is she very handsome?"

"She is considered handsome," replied Lord Towyn. "She is dark almost to swarthy, and has a gipsy's black eyes. Sir Harold almost worshipped her."

"Then she must be good?"

Lord Towyn hesitated. He knew little of the

handsome Lady Wynde, but he had an instinctive distrust of her.

"She must be good," he answered, thoughtfully. "Had she not been good Sir Harold would not have loved her."

"Ah, yes, I have thought that a hundred times," said Neva. "I shall try to win her love. She is to stay at Hawkhurst as my personal guardian during my minority, and there can be no indifference between us. It must be peace or war. I intend it shall be peace. You see, Lord Towyn, that I shall be almost completely dependent upon her for society and friendship. I am coming back a stranger to my childhood's home. Years of absence have estranged me from the friends I knew, and I have no one outside of Hawkhurst to look to, save Mr. Atkins and Sir John Freise."

"And me," said Lord Towyn, earnestly. "I am associated with them, you know. But you will not be so utterly friendless as you think. The old county families will hasten to call upon you, and you can select your own friends among them. The Lady of Hawkhurst will be fêted and welcomed, and made much of. Your trouble will soon be that you will have no time to yourself. I desire to add myself to your list of visitors. I am staying this summer at a place of mine on the Kentish coast. But here is the Dover pier straight ahead, Miss Wynde. We have made the voyage in good time, despite the roughness of the Channel."

There was no time for further conversation. The suggestive bowls were being hidden under benches by the late sufferers, and bundles, boxes and bags were being sought after with reviving energies.

Arctress arose, found her travelling-bag and umbrella, then sought for her charge. As her gaze encountered Neva's piquant face captured to the admiring glances of a handsome young gentleman she looked shocked and horrified, and her sharp, ashen features became vinegary in their expression.

She approached the young lady with unseemly haste, and exclaimed:

"Miss Wynde, I am surprised—"

"Pardon me," said Neva, quietly interposing, although her face flushed haughtily, "but I desire to introduce to you, Mrs. Arctress, my old friend Lord Towyn."

The young earl bowed, and Mrs. Arctress did the same, divided between her desire to be polite to a nobleman and her anger that Neva should have renewed his acquaintance while under her charge.

Arctress was deep in the confidence of Lady Wynde and Craven Black, and her interests were identical with theirs. She had a keen scent for danger, and in the attitude of Lord Towyn towards Neva she recognized an admiration which might easily deepen into love.

"Come, my dear," said Mrs. Arctress, anxiously. "The boat is at the pier, and we must hasten ashore. Give me your dressing bag—"

She paused, seeing that Lord Towyn had already possessed himself of it.

The young earl offered his arm to Neva, and she placed her hand lightly upon it, and was conducted along the boat to the place of landing. Mrs. Arctress followed, biting her lips with chagrin.

The landing and examination of baggage were duly accomplished, and Lord Towyn accompanied his charge to a first-class carriage of the waiting train, seated them, and took his place beside Neva.

"Are you going to Hawkhurst also, my lord?" inquired Mrs. Arctress, sourly.

"No, madam, not to-day," answered the young earl, pleasantly. "I am on my way to Canterbury to consult with Sir John Freise and Mr. Atkins concerning some business relative to the Hawkhurst property, and I shall probably do myself the honour to call with them upon Miss Wynde in a day or two."

"Lady Wynde will be happy to see you and to consult with you," said Mrs. Arctress, with ill-concealed annoyance. "Miss Wynde is too young, I should judge, to understand anything about business. Besides, her friends should spare her all trouble of that description."

"I shall be always ready to consult with you about business, Lord Towyn," said Neva, in her clear, low voice. "I desire to fit myself for my position as owner and dispenser of a large income. I regard the money entrusted to me as a talent for which I shall be called to account, and I want to learn to manage my affairs properly, and with prudence and discretion."

Mrs. Arctress was silenced, but she thought within herself:

"Our young lady has opinions of her own, and has the courage to express them. I am afraid that she is not the bread-and-butter school-girl we expected. It is likely that we shall have trouble with her."

The journey to Canterbury was accomplished only too quickly for Lord Towyn and Neva. They talked of their childhood, but no allusion was made to their childish betrothal, although both doubtless thought of it.

The young earl explained that he had been over



to Brussels for a week, and had had no thought of meeting her on his way home, but his face as well as his tones told how glad he was of that meeting.

The Hawkhurst carriage with its liveried servants was waiting at the Canterbury station when they alighted.

Lord Towny assisted the ladies into the vehicle, bade them adieu, and, as they drove away, followed them with a lingering gaze.

"How beautiful Neva is!" he murmured to himself; "and so graceful and sweet and tender—yet spirited. I wonder if she remembers our childish betrothal. I don't like that Artress, and I do not quite like Lady Wynde. I hardly think Neva will be happy with her, their natures being so dissimilar. I must go to Hawkhurst to-morrow, and judge whether they are likely to get on well together. If Neva should not like her step-mother she has but one avenue of escape from her dominion before she comes of age, and that avenue is marriage. If she would only marry me! I love her already. Love her! I could adore her."

A passionate flush arose to his fair cheek, and a tender, glowing light to his warm blue eyes; and he descended the steps and strode out of the station, his heart thrilling with the strange and new sensation which he now knew was love.

As he walked along the street he vowed within himself that he would woo and, if he could, would win young Neva Wynde to be his wife.

Ah, he little knew the guile that would arise between him and her—the dangers, the perils, the sorrows they two must taste.

Even as he strode along, unknowingly to his own soul that he was Neva's lover, Neva was speeding across the pleasant country towards the home where her enemy awaited her with schemes perfected, and an evil heart hidden under a smiling face.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

Upon the morning of the day on which Neva Wynde and Lord Towny so strangely encountered each other upon the dingy packet-boat—an encounter that was destined to be fatal—a scene transpired in one of the London suburbs to which we would call the attention of the reader.

In an upper room in one of the dingiest houses of one of the dingiest crocots at New Brompton a young man, a mere youth, was engaged in painting a picture. The room was bare and comfortless, with threadbare carpet, decrepit and worn-out furniture, and springless sofa-bed—one of the poorest rooms in fact a lodging-house of the fourth rate can furnish.

There were two windows without curtains, and provided only with torn and faded blue paper shades, rolled up and confined with cotton cord. A few ashes were in the grate, showing that although the season was summer a fire had lately burned there.

The picture which the youth was painting stood upon an easel before one of the windows, and was but little better than a dash. It had been sketched by a bold and vigorous hand, but was faulty in conception and ill coloured. The light upon it was bad, and the hand that wielded the brush was trembling and impatient—weakened by fasting and emotions.

The painter looked a mere boy, although he was fully twenty years of age. His complexion was florid, his eyes hazel in hue, and he wore his brown hair long, artist-fashion, and tossed back from his high, white forehead.

He was handsome, with an honest look in his eyes, and a pleasant mouth, but his chin was short, and weak in its expression, and his countenance betrayed a character full of good and noble impulses, yet with a weakness, indecision, and irresolution that might yet prove fatal to him.

He was dressed in a shabby, velvet jacket, daubed with paint and out at the elbows. His garments, like his lodging, betrayed poverty of the most unmitigated description.

This young man was Rufus Black, the only son of Craven Black, who was Lady Wynde's lover—the Rufus Black whom his father and Lady Wynde had planned should marry Neva Wynde, and thus play into their hands, enabling them to possess themselves of a portion of Neva's noble fortune.

As Mr. Black had said, he had quarrelled with his son some weeks before, and cast him off penniless and destitute of friends, to shift for himself. He had drifted to his present lodgings, and was trying to keep soul and body together by painting wretched pictures, which he sold to a general dealer for wretched pay.

"The picture doesn't suit me," he said, pushing back his chair that he might get a better view of the painting. "It's only a dash, but it's as good as the pay. I've been three days at it, and it won't bring me in even the fifteen shillings I got for the last. It will do to step up a chimney-place, I suppose—had I such grand ideas of my art and of my talents! I meant to achieve fame and fortune, and now I am, without food or fuel, with the rent due, and with my soul so fettered by these cares, so borne down by despair and remorse, that I am incapable

of work. I have gone to the dogs, as my father told me to go—but oh, why did I not travel the downward road alone? Why must I drag her down with me?"

A despairing look gathered on his face; the tears filled his eyes; a sob escaped him. He looked haggard, worn, and despairing. He was in no condition for work, yet he resumed his task with blinded eyes, and painted on at random with feverish haste.

He had grown somewhat calmer, with the stoniness of an utter despair, when the door opened, and a girl came in bearing a large basket, heavily laden.

She was a slender young creature, not more than seventeen years old, and her pale face and narrow chest betrayed a tendency to consumption. Her complexion was of a clear olive tint; her hair was of a blue-black colour, and was worn in braids; her eyes were dark and loving, with an appealing expression in them; and, despite the circumstances of her lot, she maintained a hopeful, cheerful spirit and a sunshiny countenance.

She was the young music-teacher for whose sake Rufus Black had quarrelled with his father. She was the last member of a large family who had all died of consumption. She had lost her situation in a ladies' school about the time that Rufus had separated himself from his father; and after the young man had abandoned his parent he had hastened to her and begged her to marry him.

He was full of hope, ambitions, determined to achieve fame and fortune by his painter's brush, and she was weak and worn, sorrowful and nearly ill, and quite penniless.

Believing in his talents and ability to support them both, she had accepted the refuge he offered her, and one week after Craven Black had turned his son adrift the young pair were married, and moved into their present dingy quarters.

They had joined their poverty together, and soon discovered that the achievement of fame and wealth was uphill work.

Rufus was fresh from his university, unused to work for his bread, and he had over-rated his talent for painting, as he soon discovered. He found it hard work to sell his poor efforts, and he could not paint enough at first to bring him in twenty shillings a week.

It was now three months since his marriage, and one by one his books, his better articles of clothing, his watch, and other trinkets, had been sold or pledged to buy necessities or pay the rent. Upon this morning they had had no breakfast.

"How big your eyes are, Rufus!" laughed the young wife, throwing off her battered little hat. "You look as if I had brought you some priceless treasure; but you will marry, for I have the nicest little breakfast we have had for a week."

"Where did you get it?" inquired the young artist, his thin cheeks flushing with an eagerness he could not conceal. "Have you prevailed on the grocer to give us credit?"

"No, I could not do that," and the young wife shook her head. "I'm afraid his heart is as hard as the nether millstone we read about. He thinks I'm a cheat! But our landlady, Mrs. McKellar, you know, has faith in your picture, and I borrowed two shillings of her. See what a sumptuous repast we shall have," and she proceeded to display the contents of her basket, unpacking them swiftly. "Here's twopenny worth of coffee, a pennyworth of milk, a threepenny loaf, and a superbasher of ham of the kind described by the Irishman as 'a strake of fat and a strake of lane.' And here's a bundle of wood to boil the coffee; and I've gone to the extravagance of a sixpenny pot of jam, your appetite is so delicate. And now for breakfast."

She piled her wood skilfully in the grate, put on her coffee-pot and frying-pan, and lighted her fire.

Then, while her breakfast was cooking, she laid her table with her scanty ware, and bustled about like an incarnate sunbeam, and no one would have suspected that she too was weak and hungry, and that she was sick at heart and full of dread for the future.

"So breakfast is provided for," murmured Rufus Black, in a tone in which it would have been hard to tell which predominated, relief or bitterness. "I began to fear we should have to fast to-day as we did yesterday."

The young wife turned her mayer of ham in the pan, and put her small allowance of coffee in the pot, before she answered, gravely:

"Rufus, I think I might get another situation to teach music. I have good references, you know. I don't like being so utterly dependant upon you. You have not been used to work. I'm afraid we did very wrong in getting married."

"What else could we do?" demanded Rufus Black. "I could not see you working yourself to death, Lally, when a little care would save you. You had to go out of doors in all weathers, and you were going into a galloping consumption. I expected to be able to support you, but I'm only a useless fellow, after all. I thought I had talent,

but it has turned out like the fairy money—it has changed to dead leaves at the moment of using it. I have a university education, and would be thankful for a situation as usher in a dame's school. I am willing to dig ditches, only I'm not strong enough. Oh, Lally, little wife, what is to become of us?"

Lally Black—she had been christened Lally by her romantic mother, after the heroine of Moore's poem, but her name had lost its romantic sound through years of every-day use—approached her young husband, and softly laid her cheek against his. She stroked his hand gently as she said:

"It is I who am useless, Rufus. You ought to have married a rich wife instead of a poor little music-teacher. 'I'm afraid you'll reproach me in your heart some day for marrying you—there, there, dear boy! I did not mean it. I know you will never regret our marriage, let what will be the result!'"

She caressed him tenderly, then hurried to the fire, intent upon her breakfast. The coffee was steaming and the ham was cooked. The busy little housewife made a round of toast, then announced that breakfast was ready. Rufus drew up his chair to the table, and Lally waited upon him, and was so gay, and bright, and hopeful, that he became infected with her spirit.

But when the delicious breakfast was over he became grave and haggard again, and bowed his face on his hands and sat in silence, while she washed the dishes and carefully put away the remnants of the meal.

Then she came to him and sat on his knee, and drew his hand from his face, and whispered:

"Rufus, is your father rich?"

"He has some three or four hundred pounds a year—that's all," answered Rufus. "Why do you ask?"

"Could he not assist us a little if he wished?" ventured Lally. "I have no relative to apply to. I had a great-aunt who married a rich man, and I think she lives in London, but I don't know her name, and she probably never heard of me, so I can't write or go to her. Let us humble ourselves to our father, dear—"

"To what purpose?" interposed Rufus, half fiercely. "My father is a mercenary, villainous—Don't stop me, Lally; I am telling the truth if he is my father. Thank Heaven, I took after my poor mother. My father does not know we are married, and I dare not tell him. If I fear anybody in this world I fear my father."

"But he must know somehow of our marriage," urged the young wife. "You make me afraid, dear, that we did wrong in marrying. We are too young, and I had to work for my living. Your father could never forgive me, and accept me as his daughter. My family is of no account, and yours is good. People think of all these things, and you will be looked down upon for your unfortunate, ill-starred marriage. Oh, Rufus, if we could undo what we have done it might be well for us."

The young husband endeavoured to console his wife, and he had brought back her bright hopefulness when the postman's knock was heard on the street door.

A sudden hope thrilled them both. They listened breathlessly, and not in vain.

Presently the housemaid's heavy tread was heard on the stairs, and she entered the room, bringing a letter.

When she had departed Rufus opened the letter, and the young couple perused it together.

It was dated Wyndham village, and had been written by Craven Black; it contained simply an announcement that the father desired to be reconciled to his son, that he saw a way in which he could make Rufus a rich man, and he begged his son, if he also desired a reconciliation and wealth, and was willing to submit himself to his father's will, to come to him at once by the earliest train. Between the leaves of the letter was a ten-pound note.

"You will go of course?" cried the young wife, excitedly.

"I wish I knew what he meant," muttered Rufus, irresolutely.

"He is your father, dear, and you will go," urged Lally. "For my sake, you will go. Dear Rufus, I beg you to yield to his wishes. He will not be unreasonable, I am sure. Say you will go!"

Rufus hesitated.

He knew that when with his father he was a coward without a will of his own. What if he should be driven to do some act he should hereafter repent? Yet at last he consented to go to his father, and in an hour later he divided his money with his wife, giving her the larger share, and took his departure.

At that last moment a horrible misgiving came over him, and he ran back and kissed the little sunshiny face he loved, then went out again and made his way to the station with a death-like pall upon his soul.

(To be continued.)



[MRS. KENT.]

### IGNORANCE WAS BLISS, BUT WAS IT FOLLY TO BE WISE?

MR. HOWELLS, the rich man of the neighbourhood, gave a party—a party in the open air, to which all the young people had been invited, not on account of the host being an especially young man himself, but because he liked not so much to fancy that he was a young man as to rejuvenate himself. So all the youths and maidens were at Riverside in full force, numbering perhaps fifty or sixty.

A great many pretty faces were to be seen there. Rounded features, clear, glowing skins, and bright eyes, are not often associated with plainness, and most girls in their teens and early twenties possess these advantages.

Then it was June, and the girls wore fresh white dresses and bright ribbons, or else delicately tinted organdies, and looked like summer clouds and garden flowers and butterflies, and anything else you might happen to think of.

Margie Flanders looked like a rose, in the purest of organdies covered with the most delicate pink rosebuds, and with trailing green vines in her hair, which was dark; her eyes were dark too, and her cheeks were rose tinted. She was beautiful on this occasion, inasmuch as she was well dressed and happy and animated.

Ordinarily you might pass her without a second glance. A refined, high-bred-looking girl she was, to be sure, but sallow and listless. However, I will let you into a secret: she was one of those who improve with years, and fill up, and lighten up, and brighten up.

She was a sentimentalist, given to analysing, to introspection. Therefore she did not enjoy herself at Mr. Howells's picnic half as much as the majority of her cotemporaries there.

She did not throw herself with sufficient simplicity and single-heartedness into the present, and live just in that and for that. She wondered what it all

meant, how these other people felt; she weighed and criticised her own affairs, her own happiness even.

For she was happy. She was young—barely twenty—free from care, and beloved. And what more could she desire than youth and love? I am inclined to think, however, she would have realized her blessings more fully if it had been possible for her to have first been old and neglected, then to have gone back to "love's young dream." The force of contrast would have stung her into a more intense appreciation.

George Robeson sat beside her, or rather lounged beside her, on the grass, holding her parasol, and descending in a general way on matters and things.

It was generally supposed that these two were engaged, although they were not. George had never said "Will you?" in so many words, although a pretty good understanding existed between the two—so good an understanding, in truth, that it provoked Margie sometimes. George was too confident, too easy, too philosophical.

On second thoughts it may be that Margie was not so very exacting, after all. If one has a lover one would desire him to be of the traditionally ardent, impulsive, head-over-heels kind.

I am inclined to think George Robeson was not capable of that sort of thing, however. He was a brilliant fellow in some respects; he might have really made his mark in life if he had had fewer advantages to begin with and greater inducements to urge him on.

But somehow he had always let things drift past him; he had been waiting for the right opening all his life, and the right opening had never come. It was a pity; it is always a pity to see good natural gifts run to waste. He had studied law, for instance, then had never devoted himself to the practice of his profession because he did not like the drudgery, and no telling case had ever come in his way.

Unfortunately he could afford to be idle. Then he had a talent for inventions, and he devoted himself to that for a while with tolerable success; only he

never quite finished up any one idea. There was always a hitch here or a difficulty there, or else some other man got ahead of him, or he discovered at the last moment that his plan had practical disadvantages.

In the intervals he would devote himself to literature. He wrote verses—forgive him when I add that they were really tolerably good ones—sketches, scientific articles. Sometimes they were published, sometimes they lay by for months in his desk, and were finally committed to the flames.

There was merit in almost everything he did, but then it was merit in the ore. It needed working up.

Obviously he lacked application; less obviously he lacked that subtle requisite to success—force.

Margie Flanders had not discovered this yet. She had fine intuitions, but she was apt to be blinded by her prejudices; and George Robeson had acquired a certain influence over her. She had been told that he was brilliant and versatile and original, and she had also made the discovery for herself. She believed in him as girls are apt to believe in the men they like. Least of all would she have admitted that he was unstable and weak.

Could any characteristic be more fatal than that to the success of a man?

Margie was a strong character herself, self-reliant and earnest, and she instinctively demanded this first of all in others.

Nay, not so much demanded as took it for granted that it obtained in their case as in her own. She pictured for George, for instance, a long career of honourable activity. She imagined that he would become one of the leading men of the place where they lived; would rise to influence and dignity. She had even unconsciously identified herself with his success of late. He filled most of her thoughts. Woman-like, her own ambitions, her own aspirations all tended to an amalgamation with his.

She was very immature in feeling for one of her age. Perhaps because she had always led a secluded, thoughtful life; had seen little of people, and had lived with books. She was an only daughter, and her father was her only surviving parent. She had lived a great deal to herself, a life more intellectual than emotional. And now at twenty she believed that her soul had come to her, and that she was in love. I leave you to decide how far she was right in this.

Meanwhile she and George talked; or rather he talked—narrated; he could tell a story well, had had a great many experiences, and was very droll and entertaining.

Margie interpolated now and then, was by turns incredulous, sarcastic, severe, impressed; she was a model listener. That was one secret of her charm, I conjecture. George had never liked her so well. For one reason, she had never been so handsome; and he adored physical beauty, and elegant dresses, and style, and manner. Not that he was either an Apollo or a Beau Brummel himself. On the contrary, he was rather negligent in his dress, careless in his manners and attitudes, and, to tell the truth, a little ungainly and awkward, if a man may be said to be that and yet more or less striking-looking at the same time.

Presently there was a slight stir—a rustling among the trees and bushes—approaching voices, and three or four persons appeared in the part of the grounds which hitherto George and Margie had had all to themselves.

They were in a cool, breezy little grove sloping down to the water's edge—a clear, winding creek which skirted Riverside, and finally emptied into the—no, I won't tell you the name of the river—a few miles above the town where these people lived.

As the new arrivals advanced down the path the words died away on George Robeson's lips.

Margie turned to see why he stopped so suddenly, and was struck by the curious expression on his face, the compression of his lips, the contraction of his brows. She wondered what was wrong.

He had a face like some girls have in respect of betraying emotion. By the way, the effort of self-control in an emergency, expressed by compression of the lips, more often indicates a wavering resolution than strength or determination. An acute observer might have noticed now that George Robeson was struggling after a composure and an indifference he had by no means attained to.

Margie followed the direction of his eyes.

"Ah, Mrs. Kent," she said. "When did she come?"

"I don't know. I was not aware that she was expected. Who is that man in gray?"

"Some one belonging to the London party, I suppose. Anna Dare told me that their house was to be full for the next month. And gay, of course. Whenever the Dares congregate it is sure to be lively. Here we have Anna and Etta, besides Evelyn Kent."

Who was this married daughter of the house, a wife of a year, home for a visit now for the first time since her wedding? She had married very im-



prudently and hastily, and no one knew exactly why or wherefore. The ill-natured said for money; but, if this were so, she had been greatly disappointed.

Mr. Kent had been very unfortunate, and had lost within the last six months almost everything he had ever owned. He had great rebound, however, and was, so to speak, on his feet again in a marvellously short space of time. He was in London now, making money his wife hoped, but for her part she looked as though sorrow had never touched her—so bright, so beautiful, so brilliant.

It was small wonder, perhaps, that her marvellous gift of beauty touched all with whom she came in contact; perhaps that was the reason that, as George Robeson caught her roving eye presently, and rose and doffed his hat, the colour rose in his face. Even at twenty-seven he had retained the boyish habit of blushing.

The man in gray, and a young man in a breezy white suit, spread gray striped shawls on the grass, wherever Mrs. Kent and Etta Dare, and a third cavalier disposed themselves. Thereupon much lounging, much talking, and a general air of uproariousness ensued.

The conversation between Margie and George languished. George apparently found it impossible to keep his eyes off the gay party from London, and Margie was weak enough to be hurt and offended, and unsophisticated enough to show it.

George watched Mrs. Kent, and commented on her dress, and manners, and attitudes, and even went so far as to inform Margie that she was the most beautiful woman he had ever known, and as irresistibly attractive to him as a willful, beautiful, intelligent child.

No woman likes to hear another woman praised in that overwhelming, enthusiastic way by her lover.

Margie was thoroughly annoyed, and the worst of it was she did not rise superior to the situation. Her own vivacity died out—she felt herself faded, and trite, and common-place, in comparison with Mrs. Kent. She hated herself, she envied Mrs. Kent, she was sorry for George, forced to be with her when he would be so much happier with some one else.

She made a move presently, and pretended that she wanted to go back to the house and listen to the music; the band was playing on the piazza, and people were dancing in one of the rooms.

She went past the Dare-Kent party with a smile on her lips, and with what were very like tears in her eyes.

Near the house, to her great relief, she met Lisle Warren, who asked her to dance. She went off with him, and thus gave George Robeson the opportunity to escape, which opportunity he immediately availed himself of.

Leaning in the doorway presently, and drinking a glass of lemonade after a feverish gallop, she distinguished his voice—rather an undisciplined, over-distinct organ, by-the-by—in the direction of the grove. And presently his laugh rolled out uproariously. Evidently he was enjoying himself in the society of that "most beautiful woman in the world with all the wilful naturalness of a child."

Margie turned away bitterly. She did not feel like dancing. She chose rather to accept Mr. Howells's arm and be talked to by him, or rather be prosed to, as she called it in her heart, which was an injustice to Mr. Howells, who was really a very agreeable man. But then Margie was in an unjust mood, and no man would have aroused her that day except him whom she had of late considered her own peculiar property.

She had driven over to Riverside, a distance of a mile or so, in George Robeson's light chaise. Of course he would expect to drive her back. If only he would not! If only she could manufacture some decent pretext for giving him the opportunity to take Mrs. Kent instead. Her pride made her very generous, you see.

Finally, late in the day, to her great delight, some of the young people proposed returning home by boat, and asked Margie to join their party. She closed with the offer without more ado. Only just as she was on her way to the boat she sent a message to George to tell him where she was, and that she had not been able to resist the temptation of a row home in the sunset. She entrusted this message to Mr. Howells, thus making sure of its delivery, for Mr. Howells had never been known to fail in delivering a message or fulfilling a commission.

Naturally George was chagrined. But then Mrs. Kent was on his arm at the time, having approached their boat with him for the purpose of making her adieu, and it was impossible just then for him to regret anything very long in her presence. Mrs. Kent laughed and clapped her white, handsome hands, threw back her beautiful head, displayed her handsome teeth, and cried:

"Good! Now, Mr. Robeson, it will be only ordinary civility for you to ask me to go with you instead. I am 'no ways proud,' and I don't in the least mind playing second fiddle."

Whereat George laughed uproariously, not for the first time that day, and agreed.

Mrs. Kent deserted the airy young man in white in order to accomplish this drive with George; but what of that? It gave all the more spice to her expedition, especially as Mrs. Kent insisted upon holding the reins herself, and passing that incensed youth at full speed on their way into town.

As Etta Dare said, "Evelyn stopped at nothing when she was once wound up."

The boating party were defiling up the street when the two or three carriages containing the Dare sisters and their escorts dashed into town.

Margie had brought it all on herself, but nevertheless it was anything but a pleasant sight to her to behold Mrs. Kent whirl by at the side of George Robeson.

"Now we shall see some fun," was the comment of Margie's companion, John Cruger. "Evelyn Dare has by no means been sobered down by her marriage. If Robeson never knew what a flirtation meant before he will realise it now. But isn't she a beauty, Miss Margie?"

That night Margie Flanders had her first fit of crying. That is, she shed the first tears that had fallen from her since those she used to rain over her lessons when they were too hard for her, or when it stormed and she was kept indoors. Oh, such different tears these were from those! Such hot, rebellious, desolate tears, wrung from her heart. Tears of disappointment they were too. It was a great grief to her, as it would have been to any true woman, to realise that the man she preferred—let us say—could be so easily unsettled.

Furthermore, she was puzzled to understand the meaning of the look that had come over George's face on Mrs. Kent's first appearance on the scene.

Margie did not know that they had been acquainted with each other before. Last year she had been away with her father travelling.

It was then that George had laid the foundations of a somewhat perilous intimacy with Evelyn Dare—then on the very eve of her marriage.

The next day George brought Margie a shawl she had left in his carriage, and came in to see her for a while.

Margie was cool, collected, rather disagreeable, if the truth must be told; she was annoyed with George, and she showed it plainly. He, who liked to be smiled upon, and considered amiability a *sine qua non* in a woman, was provoked and angered. She irritated, nettled him, almost without saying a word; you know that this is strictly possible, with some people, and in some moods.

"I hope you were not disappointed in your row yesterday?" he said, rising, after a brief, uncomfortable visit.

"Disappointed? Dear me, no! You—I am so glad it was in my power to give you such a good time with Mrs. Kent."

"She is radiant—don't you think so?"

"I hardly think I am a good judge. They say, too, a woman can't be impartial where another woman is concerned," says Margie, imprudently. "To be candid, I think she is coarse; and all the Dares are vulgar, and will be, I suppose, to the end of time. But they say Mr. Kent does not mind."

"Hang Mr. Kent!" remarked George Robeson, very low, between his teeth; but Margie heard him, and flushed indignantly. "It is all very well for persons of entirely different temperaments to criticize a woman like that," he continued; "but you cool, dispassionate women—just and well balanced—can't understand her at all. She is all emotion, easily impressed, susceptible to every influence."

"That must be a great pity; there are so many more bad than good influences in this evil world."

"It is certainly to be deplored that we all of us have not your excellent principles."

"Yes; it ought to be a matter of profound regret," sneered Margie, in return.

"Be that as it may, her—Mrs. Kent's—very artlessness and naïveté protect her. She has what is so indispensable in a woman—an even temper. To be sure, she is not a positive character; but it is very easy to forgive that in a beautiful creature such as she is. In fact, I doubt whether it is ever desirable in a woman. Well, good morning!"

With this parting thrust he was gone.

Margie walked up and down the house in great agitation. It seemed to her that he had been inexcusably cruel, personal, insulting. She wanted to get away from these scenes, from these people. She had been told that change worked miracles—change of scene, change of associations.

It angered her to think that she had wasted so much of her life on the man who had just left her—wasted so much of her life in wasting so much of emotion, of thought, of sentiment.

On the impulse of the moment she went to her father and told him that she would give anything in the world to leave home—that she was miserable. The tears were in her eyes, and she looked wonderfully appealing and pleading.

Mr. Flanders was a man of books, and knew very little of women and their ways; but he loved his daughter Margie, and he wanted her to be happy.

He laid down the volume he was poring over, took off his spectacles, considered awhile, and finally agreed that he would take Margie a trip. Whereupon she put her arms about him and kissed him fondly.

She was habitually a shy person, and demonstration was difficult to her; but to-day she needed love and protection.

It was weak in her to fly the field; it is better and braver always to meet the foe on his own ground. It is safer in the end to wrestle with trouble and trial and overcome it rather than defer the evil hour by looking a door upon it, which any chance hand may unlock at some future day, and expose you again to the assaults of your enemy.

But Margie was young and impatient, and believed in herself and in her destiny. Sorrow and pain were

A jest against Heaven, who meant

She should be, as she was, content.

No, she would not submit to be miserable. So she and her father packed up their trunks and departed on a summer trip to the Continent. Margie was interested, gratified, but, somewhat to her own surprise, not happy. Of course not. There was that "hunger at her heart" all the while.

Meanwhile George Robeson and Mrs. Kent were constantly thrown together. Mrs. Kent made no secret of her flirtation; she laughed at herself openly for having gone back to the ways of her maidenhood. She defied public opinion by her very candour and effrontery. And George accepted her cue only too eagerly. She intoxicated him like champagne. He was hardly an accountable man when the charm of her voice, the glow of her beauty, the influence of her boundless animal spirits were upon him. He was fascinated. She charmed him, bewildered him, enchanted him; he was not happy out of her presence. He could not bear to look forward to the day when he could no longer be with her.

Yet I insist that he had been no hypocrite, no villain, in professing an attachment to Margie Flanders. He had loved Margie. Loved her. I repeat the phrase advisedly. I do not say that he had loved her with all the force and intensity of which a different nature would be capable; but he had loved her truly, calmly, reasonably. He had recognized her as good, and noble, and womanly. He had said to himself that he could be happy with her; that she, of all women in the world, was the one he could trust his fate to with the greatest prospect of happiness. He had rejoiced in the hope that she, at all events, did not quite dislike him. At this juncture the beautiful temptress invaded his peaceful Eden.

He forgot Margie for the time. Evelyn Kent engrossed him utterly. Besides, Margie had offended him deeply. He disliked to be browbeaten and taunted, and he told himself that this was precisely what Margie had done. Decidedly Margie had not displayed either tact or judgment as regarded George. He required to be managed with consummate gentleness and consideration; whereas she had driven him from her by brusquerie and outspokenness. He was estranged. He believed he had forgotten her. In the wild excitement of his passion for Evelyn Kent he was dead to all other memories, hopes, and fears.

Margie Flanders had an aunt living in London whom she stopped to see, at the end of her charming journey.

Mrs. Flanders kept a very merry, bright house, was very fond of young people, and was especially attached to Margie. She persuaded her brother-in-law to have Margie with her for a while, so that Mr. Flanders, as a reward of virtue, found himself returning alone and lonely to his roof-tree.

Margie was upon the whole glad to be left. A country town is but a dull spot when you are desirous of burying dull care, and but a contracted place when you are anxious to seek distraction in other occupations.

Besides, Margie did not want to meet George just yet; she had not quite achieved that victory she wanted to gain. And, at all events, she did not want to go back home so long as Mrs. Kent was there. Her aunt went to the theatre, to the opera, to the park, to musical entertainments and dances without number, and Margie accompanied her.

It was all very new, and bright, and attractive. Margie was beginning to wake up to a full enjoyment of her life—or, rather, was beginning to realize how much there might be in life to enjoy.

But as for that victory, it was astonishing how persistently her thoughts would turn towards the past spring and summer, and George Robeson.

Moreover, it is a long while before hope is entirely crushed out of the heart. Margie would still keep on looking ahead, and thinking about George, and picturing to herself how they would meet again, and that things would gradually right themselves at last.

She heard from her father, of course, but she had no other correspondent at home. Therefore she heard no details of gossip, nothing of what went on among the people there.

She did not know that Mrs. Kent had left in due course of time for London, and that she was in London now. In fact her first intimation of this was meeting Mrs. Kent in the park, one day, on horseback—who but George Robeson riding with her!

Her aunt's carriage was being driven very rapidly, so that there was no time for more than the most formal recognition.

Margie was exceedingly unhappy after this meeting for all the rest of that day, but her spirits went up again when, on the next, Mr. Robeson called. She was out, to be sure, but then she lived on hope that he would come again.

She built greatly on the results of their next interview.

Yes, George had followed Evelyn Kent to London. He had had no plan in so doing except the desire to be near her.

For the rest, he found that Mr. Kent was a very easy-going, indolent person, and that it was altogether as easy to carry on a flirtation with Mrs. Kent in London as in the country. He was becoming more and more infatuated. He was beginning to feel less and less inclination to return to the work-a-day world, when, on the day I have mentioned, he met Margie Flanders in Hyde Park.

Something in her expression gave him a start. He had a fit of retrospection that night, and an attack of remorse the next day. In consequence of which he went to see Margie, but did not find her at home.

It would be hard to say how far the current of their two lives would have been altered if, instead, he had seen her and they had had a satisfactory talk.

He had an engagement to dine at the Kents' that day. On his way down there, after leaving a card for Margie, he made up his mind that he was acting like a lunatic and worse, and that he would make one resolute effort and escape from his bondage. Full of these thoughts he reached his destination.

The street door was standing open, and there was a little group of people in front of the house—not a noisy one, however. They appeared to all be awestruck and silent.

George went up the steps wondering, and so into the hall. Two or three servants were standing at the end of the hall, talking in whispers. People were moving about the upper hall hurriedly. As George stood there the doctor came down; George recognized him from having seen him before.

"Shocking affair; terrible blow; Mrs. Kent is completely overcome," the doctor said.

"What has happened? I have just come."

"Mr. Kent has had a fit of apoplexy. He has been brought home. But it is unlikely that he can be revived. You are intimate here, I believe. Mrs. Kent desires to have her mother and sisters telegraphed for. Will you see to it? Do you know the address?"

George Robeson turned and left the house with Doctor Smith, feeling as though in a dream. He saw to the telegram, wandered about aimlessly for a while, then went home and wrote a note to Evelyn, offering her his services, and putting himself entirely at her disposition.

Poor woman!—she rained a torrent of tears over that note. Truth to tell, she loved George Robeson passionately, and now that her husband was dead this seemed far more a sin than it had appeared during his life, when she had been oppressed by the burden of a loveless marriage.

Now his cold, dead face was a perpetual reproach to her. If only she had not met George Robeson until afterwards!

I tell you all this so that you may realize that there were truth and goodness even in this thoughtless, reckless, undisciplined woman of pleasure.

She refused to see George until after the funeral. She shed a great many genuine tears, and made a great many good resolutions, and had her regrets and her remorse.

She was left almost penniless, and the house where they had lived would have to be sold over her head before her husband's affairs could be straightened up. Then she meant to go back home again with her mother.

George Robeson called to inquire for her a day or so after the funeral, and was admitted by mistake, and ushered by the servant into the drawing-room where Mrs. Kent was sitting, all by herself, in the twilight, her gorgeous beauty a little softened and toned down by her black dress and her unwonted pallor.

She raised her head languidly as Mr. Robeson entered; then, as she recognized him, she held out her hand.

George took it eagerly, and tried to frame a few words of sympathy. But Evelyn forestalled him by bursting into a passion of tears.

He would have been less than man to have remained unmoved by her self-reproaches, her contrition, her sorrow. She spared no harsh words; she called herself by all manner of searching, bitter names. She tore up the past remorselessly.

It was not her way to make-believe, or to keep anything back, whatever might be her other faults; so, now, she looked in George Robeson's face and

told him that she had been false to her "poor dead husband," false to her better nature—weak and unworthy. George walked up and down in great agitation whilst she poured out the floodgates of her grief.

It was not until the first violence of her emotions had spent itself that he attempted to soothe her, to calm her; then—well, George was the only person in the world who could have succeeded in the least in so doing.

Evelyn quieted down presently, poor woman, almost from sheer exhaustion; at the same time altogether rested and composed by the fascination, the soothing charm of George's voice and presence.

Mrs. Dare took her daughter home with her, and Evelyn gradually overcame the shock of her husband's death, although, all that following winter, she bore perpetual witness to the fact in her flowing mourning robes and broad crepe veil.

These were penance in every way to her, who hated gloom and any reminder of gloom, and loved colour and light and brightness. But she had quite made up her mind to be discreet and conventional.

It may be that she had a motive in this; when one is very obnoxious of one of the greatest, fairest gifts of life one feels disposed to propitiate the gods, or destiny, or Providence—according to one's lights.

The very depths of Evelyn's nature—shallow, frivolous worldling that she had always been before this—were stirred. She loved George Robeson. She would have died for him willingly—what was very much more to the purpose, she was willing to live for him; I mean, to make herself worthy of the love of the good man she believed him to be; to regulate herself, discipline herself.

She had a dim misgiving that although he had been willing enough to compromise her by a very conspicuous flirtation, she was, after all, not the kind of woman he would ask to be his wife. The Robesons were respectable, solid, substantial members of society—very different from the Dares.

It was wonderful with what tact Evelyn addressed herself to the task before her.

George was in the way of coming to see her frequently, and that was very much in her favour; all that remained for her was to retain him at her side. She had no rivals.

Because Margie Flanders spent that winter in London, and did not set her face towards the rural districts until spring.

The day after her return she, sauntering down street, came upon George Robeson. He was walking along in rather a dejected attitude, his hands in his pockets, his head on his breast. He started and coloured up, partly with surprise, partly with pleasure, when he saw Margie.

She greeted him more indifferently and nonchalantly than she had ever done before since their acquaintance had budded and blossomed.

"Yes, I have to settle down for a while," she said, "and be sensible and strong-minded. I have been a mere butterfly all the winter long. One has very little excuse for that sort of thing here."

She had greatly altered somehow. It is curious how one can alter even in a few months. Her stylish dress, and the little indescribable air that girls acquire in a city, were very becoming to her. But added to this there was a far-off look about her which somehow puzzled George. She had formerly been so engrossed in all he had to say, so thoroughly interested, so held; and now he might have been any ordinary stranger. Could she be thinking of some one else? Was that the reason why she wore that absent, preoccupied manner?

George sighed involuntarily; then he glanced again at Margie, but she had recognized an acquaintance across the street, and was smiling at her. She confessed that she was simply out with no purpose more definite than to look round her before settling down, so George drifted about with her, and so wasted that whole long morning.

They went into picture-shops and book-shops; and Margie laughed and listened as of yore—and the old, subtle attraction of her presence grew once more upon this impressive, unstable man, just as it used to. Moreover he was not like the fox with the sour grapes; he always coveted most what hung farthest out of his reach.

Now that Evelyn Kent might be had for the asking, and Margie Flanders, on the contrary, had melted into an indefinite middle-distance, he valued Margie as he had never valued her before. Thereupon he sighed again.

Margie, to be sure, had seen no one else she liked better than George. She had by no means lost her heart; she was very far from being "in love" for the second time in her life, but, nevertheless, she had awakened from her first love-dream—awakened as utterly as though she had never dreamed it. It seemed wonderful to her that she should ever have cared for this man. In fact, had it been in the power of any one with a longer memory than she was

blessed with to have reminded her of her former thoughts and hopes and fears, as regarded George Robeson, I am inclined to think she would have denied the soft impeachment.

Absence is a sovereign cure for diseases of the heart, and acquaintance with the world, and coming in contact with new faces and new characters, are very apt to modify one's estimate of old faces and characters. Not, of course, where heart has met heart—truly.

But where an affection does not stand this test of time and separation it is a very sure sign that it is not built on very secure foundations. Margie had had time to think. She had compared George with other men. Moreover she had fully made up her mind that she could be happy without him. In a word, she was independent of him now.

For his part, from that day his troubles began. If you are a woman you will not be sorry to hear this, because after all he had once—not so very long ago, either—been disposed to make Margie the victim of his fecklessness and inconstancy. Now he was reaping the harvest he justly merited.

It was wonderful how cool and dispassionate Margie had grown of late! Six months ago there was a glamour over George Robeson, and she was utterly unable to view him with unprejudiced eyes. Now it was so different. She could actually admit to herself that he was wavering and weak, did not know his own mind, was swayed by every wind that blew.

She was not long in hearing about his relations to Mrs. Kent. She heard how constantly he had been at the Dares' all the winter—on what familiar terms he was received in the family; especially how intimate he was with Mrs. Kent.

Some one even went so far as to say that Evelyn was only waiting for a decent time to expire—say a year—to marry him. But of this Margie had her doubts. It was very plain to those keen eyes of hers that George was not an engaged man.

In fact he took pains to give her to understand very speedily that there was nothing whatever between Mrs. Kent and himself. He insisted upon talking about Evelyn. That is to say, in a general way—quoting her, alluding to her, referring to her, very evidently with the view of showing that he could talk about her with perfect sang froid and indifference.

Margie, for her part, let him choose his own topics of conversation.

What was it to her whom he talked about? She sometimes wondered how it had been possible that this very man had ever caused her sleepless nights and miserable days!

One evening she was sitting in the little balcony which opened from her drawing-room, when George came by, stopped to lean over the rail, then came in. He was unusually quiet this evening; he sat looking abstractedly over the balcony into the street, into the trees, up skyward. Presently he said:

"It is precisely a year since that picnic at Riverside to which you went with me. Do you remember?"

"Distinctly. We went together, but we did not return together, I remember also."

"But that was your fault, not mine. We never were as good friends afterwards."

"Ah! Whose fault was that?"

"My conscience certainly acquitted me. I have weighed the matter more than once."

"It was hardly worth while."

"So you may think. So I did not think. Day by day I deplore more deeply any shadow of misunderstanding with you. If I valued your good opinion, your regard, a year ago, I value it fifty times more now. I only wish I had understood my own heart, my own needs, then as well as I understand them to-day. I thought that I loved you a year ago, but I had only begun to entertain for you the tenth part of what I feel at this moment."

"This would have pleased me better as a hope than as an actual grace it can at all—that's said, I'm thinking," quoted Margie to herself out of Aurora Leigh. Then to him: "Don't go on, please. It is only a waste of words. I hope you do not care for me so very much, because I—don't be hurt or offended; you seem to expect me to say yes, but, indeed, I can't. I have changed, too, since last year. I have arrived at the conclusion that I am not a marrying woman; at all events, that I have a curious heart not easily touched. I am so sorry."

And she looked up at him deprecatingly with a mist in her frank eyes.

He was dreadfully disappointed. He urged his suit; he pleaded with her; but she was obstinate. She shook her head.

"No," she said; "I do not love you in the least. I understand myself thoroughly, too, I think. Sometimes I think I shall never love any one. Perhaps I have had the sweet contagion in a dream—who knows?—and have had it so badly that I shall never take it again. And I do not mean to marry without love, you may be sure. Besides, my father needs me, and I have a very busy, active life before



me. My duty is just here at home, and I propose to be very useful and practical. Indeed, I am in earnest."

He saw that she was. He did not linger much longer, but bade her good-night and good-bye. And when he had gone Margie felt as though some one had just died, and she had been to the funeral. But as for a tear or a regret, or a tender, delicious, sentimental feeling, nothing was farther from her mind.

It was a pity. She would have made George Robeson a good wife if she had gone on loving him. She would have done for him more than any one else in the world could have accomplished. I doubt whether she would have developed in the same degree herself. That alone may reconcile us to the fact that, unlike most girls, she did not marry the first choice of her youth.

As for George, he married Evelyn Kent in the end. As a matter of course, he drifted back to her after Margie refused him, and basked in the summer of her smiles, and finally made her the happiest of women, and himself a reasonably happy man.

Margie, for her part, is still working out the programme she had sketched for herself. She is contented, and useful, and beloved. She has not married; I doubt whether she ever will.

"Human nature is various," as Silas Gregge used to say; but with some it is as sung by the poet:

The world blooms every year,  
But the heart just once, and then  
When the blossom falls off sore,  
No new one comes again.

M. L.

### FACETIE.

A MAN in America is described as having Ohio features if he has only one.

CAN you suggest a suitable wife for a seedsman? Oh, yes, a nursery-maid.

INSTRUCTIVE COLLOQUY.—"What has you in that paper?" "Soda." "Soda! what's soda?" "Why, don't you know what soda is? That are stuff what you puts in biscuits that makes 'em git up and hump themselves."

DECLINED WITH THANKS.—When a Bridgewater deacon nudged a sleeping stranger with the contribution-box the other Sunday that individual awoke to acknowledge the attention, but went off again, softly protesting that "he didn't smoke."

COMPLIMENTARY OPINION.—A compliment to a Scotch pastor was thus neatly expressed by one of his flock: "I like the sermons that bejumble the judgment and confound the sense; od, sir, I never saw one that could come up to yourself" at that."

IMPRESSIONABLE.—A male flirt says his heart is like a peeled onion—one layer peels off with an old impression, only to lay bare the "virgin purity" of the next layer, ready to receive another impression. Lachrymose, isn't it?"

PRACTICAL AGREEMENT.—During the agitation of the Reform question in 1832 the cry was for "the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." A well-known Edinburgh Conservative happening at the time to dine at an inn in Perth, was attended by a loquacious waiter who volunteered his opinion that the demand should be rigorously enforced. The guest resolved to punish him for his forwardness, and, on the dinner bill being brought, gave him its exact amount. "Oh, sir," said the waiter, "do you allow nothing to myself?" "Not a penny," was the reply. "I am, like yourself, 'for the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill.'"

WINNING A WOMAN.—Some one who pretends to know says: "Don't talk about 'going to work' to win the affections of a woman; it can't be done in that way. The more you go to work the more she won't like you. Push her into a duck pond and pull her out by the hair. If you are afraid to do this, jump in yourself, and let her pull you out. Lend her money; borrow some from her. Make her believe she has deeply wronged you, and then forgive her. Deeply wrong her and don't ask to be forgiven. In short, contrive to lay her under a lasting obligation to you, or to lay yourself under a lasting obligation to her. It does not make the difference of a headless pin which, so far as concerns the result." Is this right, ladies of the Woman's Right Association?

A SMART HORSE TRICK.—One of the smartest things ever done in horses was performed by a dealer from Cumberland in the yard of one of the principal hotels in Preston. Two Irish dealers had a horse to dispose of, a splendid animal, for which they asked one hundred guineas. The Cumberland man bid seventy, which was indignantly refused, and after some higgling he offered eighty, which bid was also rejected. At length he asked if the animal would go in harness, and was answered in the affirmative. "Put him in, then, and let's see." The horse was harnessed to a cab, and would not budge

an inch. "Now," said Cumberland, "I can buy him at my own price," and after some farther parley he got the horse for eighty guineas. Going then to the animal's head, he hooked a finger in his lower jaw and knocked his head against the wall two or three times. "Go on now," he called to the man on the box, and away went the horse, to the great amusement of the crowd, who had gathered round. "Be jabbers!" exclaimed one of the Irishmen, "that north-country rogue has done us." A gentleman present offered the buyer one hundred guineas for the animal at once. But Cumberland would not sell for less than one hundred and twenty, saying the horse was well worth that money, and he got it. The second buyer was immediately offered twenty pounds for his bargain, but he refused it. Whether the Cumberland man used anylegerdemain with drugs or medicine in the transaction is only a matter of conjecture.

### THE HUNTER.

The forest where the deer resort,  
I know its windings well,  
I know each hoary mountain cliff,  
I know each woody dell;  
By dead mid night and broad daylight  
My tread hath sounded there;  
At dawning blush and evening hush  
I've breathed the scented air;  
Yet, hunter, it is not the bow  
My foot is set to draw,  
It is not on the distant aim  
My gaze is fixed afar.

The bounding deer may have no fear  
When I stand by the brook;  
The lake's calm flood, the bending wood—  
They know a lover's look.

Long have I trod the haunts of men,  
And wealth and pleasure sought,  
I've found there is no grief or wrong  
Where harmless deer resort,  
The blue heaven's truth, the green earth's  
youth,

Have both a cheering voice;  
The free morn's health hath stores of  
wealth  
To make my heart rejoice.  
Then ye who send the angel Hope  
To rest on worldly fame—  
A bird of paradise to perch  
On withering boughs of shame!

And ye whose store is carnal ore,  
Whose Tyrian dye is blood,  
Come out with me beneath the tree,  
And hear its teachings good.

Stand, huntsman, by this spring and trace  
Its bright path down the vale;  
A calm and pure benevolence,  
A health to all that ail,

Or glance at will o'er plain, o'er hill,  
O'er cloud and lake and sea,  
The winds come near to tell thine ear,  
Life's blessings all are free;

So thou shalt never more pursue  
With wrong one living thing,  
But walk the world thy time, for each  
Some good or joy to bring.

Unsting thy bow, and homeward go,  
With nature in thy thought,  
Nor stain with blood the pleasant wood  
Where gentle deer resort. J. W. M.

### GEMS.

THOSE days are lost in which we do no good; those worse than lost in which we do evil. In general those parents have most reverence who most deserve it, for he that lives well cannot be despised.

WHERE one thousand are destroyed by the world's frowns ten thousand are destroyed by its smiles.

THE firmest friendships have been formed in mutual adversity, as iron is most strongly united by the fiercest flame.

As no man can tell where a shoe pinches better than he that wears it, so no man can tell a woman's disposition better than he that hath wedded her.

THE way to be accounted learned is not to know everything, but to be able to marshal up what you do know, be it much or little, and tell it if occasion requires.

BISHOP DAVIS, the blind Bishop of South Carolina, is dead.

A THANK OFFERING.—The Bishop of Lincoln has presented a bell to St. Andrew's Church, Great Grimsby, "as a thank offering to Almighty God for

his goodness in enabling the parochial clergy of Grimsby to labour faithfully and zealously among their flocks during the recent severe visitation of small-pox and for preserving their lives in the peril to which they were exposed."

### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

REMEDY FOR COUGH.—I was troubled three successive winters with a very deep and troublesome cough; a friend advised me to apply to my chest a poor man's plaister, which I did, and the cough ceased instantly. The plaister seems to be only a piece of gummed paper, and cost one penny. I believe most chemists keep them. Why this effected a cure I could never comprehend, because I have always had the idea that to keep the pores of the skin open is the best preventive of colds and coughs; but the fact remains that this poor man's plaister was a perfect cure.—A.

VARNISH TO IMITATE GROUND GLASS.—To make a varnish to imitate ground glass dissolve 90 grains of sandarac and 20 grains of mastic in two ounces of washed methylated ether, and add, in small quantities, a sufficiency of benzine to make it dry with a suitable grain—too little making the varnish too transparent, and excess making it crapy. The quantity of benzine required depends upon its quality—from half an ounce to an ounce and a half or even more; but the best results are got with a medium quality. It is important to use washed ether, free from spirit.

### STATISTICS.

RELIGIOUS CENSUS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.—The South Australian census of 1871 shows 50,849 persons—men, women, and children—described as belonging to the Church of England; this number is 27.39 per cent. of the whole population. The Roman Catholics have 28,688, or 15.44 per cent. of the population; the Wesleyan Methodists, 27,075, or 14.59 per cent.; the Lutherans, 15,415, or 8.39 per cent.; the Presbyterians, 13,371, or 7.20 per cent.; the Baptists, 8,731, or 4.70 per cent.; the Primitive Methodists, 8,297, or 4.42 per cent.; the Congregationalists, 7,939, or 4.29 per cent.; the Bible Christians, 7,758, or 4.18 per cent. The remainder of the population comprises some members of the smaller denominations, with 5,438 objecting to answer, and 3,892 whose religion is not stated. The Wesleyans and Roman Catholics show the largest numerical increase since 1861. The total population in 1871 is 185,626; males, under fourteen, 39,336, and above that age, 55,472; females, under fourteen, 38,192, and above that age, 51,926.

### MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Christian Knowledge Society has resolved to offer premiums for the best essay on sundry subjects relating to Church and State, etc.

A PIECE of land adjoining the Lombard Exchange, in Lombard Street, London, has been sold for 9,000*l.*, or about 1*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* per foot-super.

THE Treasury has at the last moment declined to sanction the expenditure of public money on the publication of the eclipse reports of 1860 and 1870.

Two prizes of 400*l.* and 200*l.* each have been offered by a Swiss society for an essay on the best means for moderating the excessive consumption of ardent spirits in Switzerland.

THE magistrates of the county of Kent have determined to erect a new lunatic asylum, capable of accommodating 1,000 inmates. It is computed that the outlay will be from 150,000*l.* to 200,000*l.*

THE Empress Eugénie has presented Mr. Strobe, of the Albany, who is the owner of Camden Place, Chislehurst, with a magnificent gold snuff-box, inlaid with brilliants, and with her miniature painted thereon.

THE spirit of true religion breathes gentleness and affability; it is social, kind, and cheerful; far removed from that gloomy, illiberal superstition and bigotry which cloud the brow, sour the temper, deject the spirit, and impress moroseness on the manners.

A NOVEL CEILING.—The ceiling of the grand New Opera in Paris will be made of copper, consisting of a multitude of plates sewed together, and capable of being at any time disjointed. This roofing will be movable, so that the height of the theatre may be regulated at pleasure.

RASPBERRY JAM.—Raspberry jam is made by the ton at a place called Church's Landing, on the St. Mary's river between Lake Huron and Lake Superior. An old settler, who has partly civilized a colony of Ojibway Indians without the aid of whisky, now employs them in gathering wild raspberries, which he converts into about twenty tons of jam every year, and exports it.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. E. D.—We are not aware of any such work.  
CHILSEA.—Many thanks for your letter, which will receive due consideration.

H. T. N.—The age is much too young for the proposed position.

ADA B.—1. The handwriting is exceedingly good. 2. The writer is probably somewhat superstitious.

LUCK K.—Your note has been received, but the enclosure to which you refer is not therein.

LIONEL.—You yourself must make the selection; no person can decide for you.

A WIDOW ASKED FORTY.—Your request has already received due attention.

BALLY B.—Wait a year or two, and, in the meantime, seek the advice of your friends.

F. R.—1. Take occasionally a mild aperient; always take good exercise and live by rule. 2. It depends upon the amount of time you spend in careful practice.

ADELAIDE H.—Prefer to wait until you are sought by some one about whose antecedents and character you are in a position to inquire.

L. R.—The lines about the Fox Hunt have some merit, which is not, however, sufficiently sustained to make the verses interesting to the public.

SOPHY G.—A marriage contracted before the registrar of the district is perfectly legal; it can only be dissolved by death or divorce.

ELEANORA B.—No opinion can be formed until the manuscript has been perused. If sent it will be subject to the regulations printed at the bottom of this page.

F. F. N.—The description, though lengthy, will not enable any one to form an accurate idea of your appearance, because the age has been omitted.

JOHN C.—The cost of a monthly part of THE LONDON READER and the postage of the same to Gibraltar is one shilling.

AN OLD SUBSCRIBER.—There is no pretence for saying that any misdescription was made. The marriage is quite valid.

W. G. G.—We have searched many books bearing on the subject but can find no information upon your precise point.

CHICKEN.—1. The delinquency of the wife must be proved and relief obtained from the Divorce Court before the husband can be freed from his legal obligations. 2. Twenty pounds.

CRIPPLED CARL.—The only thing we can say to your first question is that it may be desirable for you to have a surgeon's advice. As to the others, the lock of hair has vanished, and your handwriting is fairly good.

T. R.—The ode is deficient in every elementary knowledge of the art of versification, while its substance is overcast by an inexact and morbid sentiment which renders its perusal both difficult and unpleasant.

G. G.—The circumstance is not of unusual occurrence in periodicals which present a large mass of reading to their subscribers, and is a fact with which the conductors of such publications are well acquainted.

CONSTANT READER.—Your question is not very intelligible, but we may observe that in pike fishing the hooks are generally fastened to a bit of brass wire for a few inches from the shaft to prevent the line from being snapped.

JAMES M.—If your verses possessed any touch of poetry it would be impossible to insert them in the condition in which they have been forwarded. As you apologise for the orthography, it seems to be a pity that you have not devoted the time spent in your poetical attempts to an humbler yet more necessary elementary attainment.

C. S.—You should let the matter rest as it is. You have perhaps made some mistake with which you have not acquainted us, but as far as your letter goes you are under no penalty, for you have done nothing wrong. A child unhappily born under circumstances which legally give it to "No Name" may have any name affixed to it the registrar chooses to write down.

P. B. (Dublin).—1. The pipes are polished by various layers of varnish, and repeated rubbings with fine glass paper between every other coat, then with fine pumice-stone powder on a woollen rag, next use tripoli and water, and lastly rub in a very little fine oil with a silk handkerchief. 2. It is quite true that a master is not obliged in point of law to give his servant a character when that servant leaves his service.

A. W. M.—If a person who has committed a murder in

Great Britain be found in any country abroad between the government of which and the government of Great Britain there exists a Treaty of Extradition, the offender will, after certain formalities, be delivered up to the authorities of Great Britain. The offences named in the conventions made by England with France and Denmark are murder, attempts to murder, forgery, or fraudulent bankruptcy. In the convention with the United States of America the cases are murder, attempts to commit murder, piracy, arson, robbery, forgery, and uttering forged paper.

R. S.—We must trouble you for the reference to the worthy Canon's works in which the passage you allude to occurs. We cannot find any such statement, and, until you favour us with proof, are disposed to think that such a phrase must have been uttered by some fictitious character and cannot represent the Canon's own opinion. Your narration of the well-known anecdote of Sir Walter Raleigh does not exactly coincide with the version generally received. That anecdote has been well disposed of by an eminent writer on Evidence, who observes that in the investigation about the merits of the disturbance which arose under the window of the room in which he was confined in the Tower, Sir Walter attempted to discharge a judicial function without the compulsory powers possessed by courts of justice for extracting truth, and further laboured under the disadvantage of imprisonment; whereas, in dealing with the events of past ages, he had the benefit of such securities for historical truth as the permanent effects of events visible in the shape of many memorials and in the acts of mankind. We entirely disagree with the hopeless spirit of faithfulness which pervades your communication. It is true that Mr. Bisse's recent Essays on Historical Truth, and other books, go to show that there is room for a good deal of correction in many of the works of historians, but the leading features of history remain uncontradicted, and—to quote the words of Mr. Hallam—"The presumption of history, to whose mirror the scattered rays of moral science converge, may be irresistible, when the inference from insulated actions is not only technically but substantially inconclusive."

## I MET MY LOVE

I met my love at morning,  
When birds began to sing,  
And buttercups gave warning  
"Twas now the newborn spring;  
And then I cried, "How brightly  
Young life would speed along,  
With love to guide it lightly  
"Mid bloom of flow'r and song."

I met my love at noontide,  
"Twas in a sylvan bow'r,  
And warm the sun the June-tide,  
Lay on each bright-hued flow'r;  
And then I said, "My fairest,  
Beneath love's genial light,  
The brightest things and rarest  
Grow still more rare and bright."

I met my love at nightfall,  
Beside the lattice pane,  
And mute we watched the light fall,  
And heard the wintry rain.  
I sighed, "True love will cheer thee  
When morn and noon are past—  
I drew her gently near me,  
And won my love at last."

J. F. W.

MARY W., twenty-three, short, rather stout, good tempered, has been in a good situation for a long time, and saved some money. Respondent must be a tradesman.

CHARLOTTE, nineteen, tall, fair, hazel eyes, loving, and domesticated. Respondent should be dark, and about her own age.

MILLY, eighteen, medium height, very loving and affectionate, fond of music and dancing, and would make a dutiful wife.

SARAH, thirty-two, 5ft. 4in., fair, good teeth, kind, and good tempered. Would like to marry a good, steady, sensible man.

ALBERT, forty, 5ft. 6in., fair, very steady, fond of home, is a tradesman and a widower, and wishes to marry a widow, about thirty-five.

MAIN STAR, twenty-one, 5ft. 7in., in the Navy, dark, and good looking. Would like to marry a fair young lady of a loving disposition.

DAISY, twenty-one, medium height, fair hair and eyes, pretty, affectionate, and fond of home. Would like to marry a very loving, good-looking tradesman.

ROSE, twenty, tall, brown hair and eyes, nice looking, lively, and affectionate. Would like to marry a clerk in the City, who is tall, dark, and loving.

ANNIE S., twenty-one, tall, stout, good looking, and would make a loving wife to a young man who is fond of his home. Respondent must be tall, dark, good looking, and able to keep a wife.

CORA, seventeen, medium height, light curly hair, blue eyes, good tempered, loving, and would like respondent to be tall, dark, steady, in a good position, and a little older than herself.

BERLINDA, twenty-two, a domestic servant, very amiable, and fond of home. Respondent should be steady, industrious, fond of home, and have a little money; a mechanic preferred.

ANNIE S., twenty-three, medium height, dark hair and eyes, and loving disposition. Wishes to marry a steady, respectable mechanic, about her own age; a native of Birmingham preferred.

VINCENT, twenty-one, 5ft. 5in., light brown hair, good looking, slightly lame, and a merchant's son. Wishes to marry a young lady who is good looking, affectionate, and domesticated.

ALL ALONE, thirty, tall, dark, and good looking, a widower, no children, but has a comfortable home, about thirteen hundred pounds, and expectations, is good tempered, and fond of home. Respondent must be good look-

ing, well educated, loving, good tempered, domesticated, fond of home, have some money, and a preference for this country.

MARION W., nineteen, tall, fair, accomplished, and of a loving disposition. Wishes to marry a tall, dark gentleman, not more than twenty-five years of age, who is steady, good tempered, fond of home, and able to keep a wife comfortably.

IGNATIA, twenty, medium height, dark brown hair, gray eyes, loving, fond of home and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, loving, fond of home, and good tempered; a tradesman with black curly hair preferred.

TRINUSCULO, twenty-four, medium height, fond of home, good tempered, and has a good trade, which he thinks will keep a wife comfortably. Respondent must be about his own age, and not object to use a scrubbing-brush when it is wanted.

ROSALIE, medium height, brown hair and eyes, happy disposition, good features, domesticated, accomplished, and has a small income. Respondent must be tall, dark, loving, fond of home, and a gentleman in a good position in Birmingham preferred, about thirty or thirty-five years of age.

POLLIE and ANNE—"Pollie," twenty, tall, dark hair, gray eyes, cheerful, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, fair, good tempered, and affectionate. "Anne," nineteen, medium height, fair, cheerful, good tempered, and loving. Respondent should be tall, dark, cheerful, and affectionate. Both would make good wives to respectable, steady young men, who should be about twenty-four, and able to keep a wife comfortably.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

STED by—"Beattie," nineteen, not very tall, fair, light hair and blue eyes, loving, and accomplished.

ELAIN by—"Monte Christo," twenty-three, good looking, and in good circumstances.

TOTTENHAM by—"Ella," nineteen, rather tall, agreeable disposition, very fond of sailors, and would make a loving wife.

C. T. N. by—"R. T.," twenty-one, an orphan, blue eyes, dark brown hair, good tempered, fond of children, and would try to make home comfortable.

JOHN GEORGE by—"Kitty," twenty-seven, domesticated, fond of home, and is all "John George" requires.

YORK by—"Rose," 5ft. 5in., ladylike, good looking, good figure, has moved in good society, and can fill the position in which "York" wishes to place her.

OLIVER by—"H. J.," who is tall, dark, and a clerk in the City, would make a good husband, and has a small private income.

FABIAN is responded to by—"Industry," twenty-eight, dark, of a loving disposition, and is sure she would make a good wife.

CHARLIE by—"Hetty," twenty-seven, 5ft. 5in., gray eyes, brown hair, very loving, and would make a good housewife to a kind husband.

ANNE by—"Easberry," average height, dark complexion, gentlemanly manners, good looking, in a good position, able to keep a wife comfortably, and would make a loving and devoted husband.

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BRUCE by—"S. A.," a farmer's daughter, able to manage a house, dark, and fond of home; and—"Bonnie Bess," twenty-five, a farmer's daughter, medium height, dark, domesticated, and could love a kind husband from the bottom of her heart.

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The following cannot be inserted:—"Nemo," "Annie P.," "Hester," "M. J.," "C. K.," "Lizzie," "Annie," "Jenny," "Mildred," "E. H. B.," "Emily S.," "Ada," "Nellie," "John and James," "Young Flashing Light," "Semaphore," "Thomas B.," "Paul S.," and a letter without a signature.

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